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ABSTRACT

This paper compares work patterns emerging from the first year of implementation of a job enlargement career ladder for teachers at two junior high schools. Field research and interview data are used to analyze implementation process variables, work structures, and career concepts. The study investigated problems educators consider important in the job design, the way they make sense of the reform, and mechanisms developed to handle conflicts and opportunities. Three main themes influencing plan implementation are career ladder tasks and educational impact, teacher opportunities for authority and decision-making, and career incentives. Each school had different experiences during the first year. Teachers responded in both schools with strong positive and negative feelings because they could not isolate assessment of career ladders from influence on school improvement. Perception of communicative success was important for positive assessment. Teachers were positive about substantive authority and decision-making opportunities. Strong egalitarian norms caused opportunities for authority to be uncomfortable for everyone. As a career incentive, the redesign affected groups of teachers differently. Perceived fairness of the process was significant and accountability was vital to the confidence of teachers. Time is needed during beginning stages to adjust for personality factors, disruption of traditional work norms, and need for assertive leadership. A 14-item reference list concludes the paper. (CJH)

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REDESIGNING A CAREER: TWO COMPARATIVE CASES*

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REDESIGNING A CAREER: TWO COMPARATIVE CASES

Ann Weaver Hart

In the flurry of school reform that followed the reports of a crisis in education in the early 1980s, career ladders for teachers emerged as a hopeful alternative to the current organization of the teaching career. Though they include many features, career ladders tend to fall into two major categories, emphasizing either merit pay, distributed as bonuses or by the establishment of rank, or job enlargement, providing additional responsibilities and opportunities for power and influence in the school while retaining teaching as the major focus of effort (Murphy & Hart, 1985). The rationale driving their development is the improvement of schools through the improvement of the quality of the teaching force using incentives designed to recruit, retain, and motivate highly skilled and intellectually talented teachers.

Merit pay programs have been implemented and studied in a variety of educational and other organizational settings for many years. However, the redesign of the teaching career, its tasks and authority relationships, is relatively new in the United States. The purpose of this paper is to examine the work patterns emerging from the first year of implementation of a job enlargement career ladder for teachers. Skepticism about the power of career ladders to substantially alter career and work attitudes of potential and promising teachers creates an urgent need to study such models as they develop, describe the work dynamics they create, and examine their potential as future organizing structures for teachers' careers (Rosenholtz, 1985). The paper explicates implementation process variables, work structures, and career concepts that have importance for the current career ladder plans and for attempts to redesign teaching work and concepts of teaching careers in the future.

Background

By late 1985, forty of the fifty states had implemented some form of career ladder, had enacted legislation, or were investigating the possibility of developing some form of career ladder for teachers (Education Week, 1985; Cornett & Weeks, 1985). However, major changes in the interaction patterns, accountability structures, and reward systems of work is a complicated affair. By January 1986, attacks on state career ladder incentive programs had become intense with accusations ranging from the impossibility of the new tasks envisioned by the job reformers to the incredible costs of implementing the necessary evaluation systems for merit distributions. The Tennessee plan is reported to have spent $5.1 million to distribute only $3.8 million to teachers in its initial stage (Education Week, 1986). In depth school site studies are required in order to assess the validity of the accusations and the potential of teacher career ladders.

The development of career ladders is based on a variety of values, beliefs, and research evidence. Studies of young adults entering the work force reveal shared needs for challenging work, psychological involvement in work, coaching from experienced colleagues and supervisors, and meaningful, frequent feedback (Hall, 1976). The study of a job redesign career ladder thus provides an opportunity to address the reform's impact on young teachers, their mentors, and principals as well as its impact on schools and teachers in general.

Field research completed in schools in 1984 revealed factors in peer supervision, opportunities for career advancement, leadership, and authority patterns (Hart, 1985). Other issues raised by career ladders also require examination. First, adjustments in teaching emphasizing continual

professional development are not unique (Freiberg, 1985); the common characterization of teaching in the United States as isolated and invisible, lacking a professional dialogue between members of the profession, and lacking in substantive discretion and influence and the attempts of job redesign efforts to modify these features makes the examination of outcomes vital (Lortie, 1975). Second, principals, identified by research as the gate keepers of educational reform, also began to appear as significant factors in the career ladder change process, people's attitudes, and preservation from the "vanishing effect" often identified as a threat to job redesign efforts (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Third, data from early career ladder studies using a variety of evaluation systems and reward structures point to the need for a greater understanding of the process dynamics at the work site level as these systems are implemented (Cornett & Weeks, 1985; Hart, 1985; Peterson & Kauchak, 1985; Schlechty, 1985). Finally, while formal evaluation and supervision pose the greatest challenge for career ladder legitimacy, the form of a career ladder is ultimately determined not in written plans, but in the way it is enacted in schools (Hart & Murphy, forthcoming).

Method

The comparative case method was chosen because of its great strength for answering the question, "How do authority, work, and opportunity structures emerge in schools when teachers' jobs and scope of influence are changed?" The replication logic of the multiple-case method could thus be used to verify the emergence of patterns and themes and their applicability across schools.

The reform movement currently underway provided the opportunity to learn

from people about the important values and activities in their work lives as educators (Spradley, 1980). System level data is important to examine the overall organizational development aspects of job redesign in teaching, but survey data provides information primarily at the espoused level, and the quality of feedback, interpersonal relationships, and career development is also vital to understanding reform implications (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985). The study therefore sought to examine the range of problems educators considered important in the career ladder job redesign, the way they made sense of the reform in their own terms, and the mechanisms they developed to handle the conflicts and opportunities that arose.

The Setting

Because the purpose of the study was to examine job enlargement career ladders using job redesign as the conceptual framework, two schools currently implementing the first year of a job redesign career ladder were required for the study. The schools for the study were chosen for: 1) their use of a job enlargement career ladder plan; 2) their willingness to provide access to the researcher for a participant observation study for an extended period; and 3) reasonable accessibility to the researcher.[1] The subject schools were both junior high schools, providing schools of sufficient size to include fairly large faculties but not as complex as comprehensive high schools for the initial study.

The district, located in a small city of 45,000, has experience a slow, steady growth pattern over the last several years. Student enrollments are growing steadily at a moderate rate, totalling 10,996 when the study began.

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[1]The names used for the schools, administrators, and teachers are fictitious. Some features of the schools and characteristics of individuals have been changed to protect their anonymity.

There are two junior high schools in the district; both schools participated in the study.

The community is politically and fiscally conservative, and the level of financial support being given to career ladders has subjected them to close scrutiny and evaluation. West Junior High has primarily upper middle and upper class neighborhoods. Its studentbody of 700 is served by thirty four (34) teachers, a principal, an assistant principal, a counselor, and (part-time) a psychologist and social worker. South Junior High is larger, with an enrollment of 855 students and forty three (43) teachers. Its administrative and support staff is the same size as West's. Its studentbody is almost exclusively middle class. Neither school has any minority teachers and administrators, though both schools have small minority student populations.

The district career ladder plan was designed by a task force of faculty and administrators. Each school in the district has one faculty member representative on the task force; a secondary and an elementary principal represent building administrators; and the superintendent represents the district leaders. Additional members of the task force are drawn from counseling and special education. Feedback and input from parents through the district PTA is actively sought, and the teachers' association president is a member of the task force. After the initial structure, selection procedures, and job descriptions were developed, each school designed features and job descriptions that fit within the general guidelines but were designed to meet its perceived and unique staffing and development needs. While the plans were organized differently to adjust to the quotas for positions (10% teacher leaders; 40% teacher specialists), the direct observation of teaching through clinical supervision by principals and teacher leaders, building level in-

service, and formal and informal leadership roles for teachers were features in all the plans.

Data

Gathered during the 1984-85 school year, data for the study included:

1. systematic field notes collected using participant observation methods by the researcher at the two sites for a full day twice each month during the school year;
2. journals and reflections recorded during the school year by teacher leaders, novice teachers, and some teacher specialists in the schools;
3. structured interviews with teachers, teacher leaders, novice teachers, principals, assistant principals, and teachers uninvolved in the career ladder in September/October, January/February, and April/May of the school year;
4. a mid-year survey of teacher leaders and novice teachers conducted to determine the frequency, content, and process of interactions among teachers and with principals. The return rate for the surveys was 95%;
5. jot notes of classroom observations by teacher leaders of novice teachers' instructional processes (the method of supervision mandated under the career ladder);
6. audio tapes and transcripts of the tapes of conferences between teacher leaders and novice teachers following systematic observation episodes;

7. documents from the district and schools including the district career ladder plan, school plans and job descriptions, newsletters prepared by career ladder teachers, quality circle recommendations and minutes, notes taken at district career task force meetings by school representatives, faculty meeting agendas and notes, quality circle agendas and transcripts, and other documents related to career ladder events during the year;
8. tapes and transcripts from the tapes of planning and evaluation meetings of the three teacher leaders at one of the schools;
9. unstructured, informal interviews with teachers, students, and administrators in both schools throughout the year.

Several field procedures were used to guard against researcher effects and to check participant informant perspectives. A teacher at each school site was asked to watch for specific evidence of researcher effects on the behavior of teachers and administrators relative to career ladders. At one site, career ladder teachers' supervision of novice teachers began with a "flurry of activity" immediately after the first few interviews, having languished for the first six to eight weeks of school, but teachers at both sites soon ceased to adjust to possible judgments of the researcher according to teacher informants, a benefit of prolonged presence at the site. An experienced teacher at each site who chose not to participate in career ladders was interviewed for maverick or highly critical opinions that might not have been tapped by the use of informants more involved in and committed to the career ladder, the probationary teachers, school leaders, and other teachers in the school. Several unsuccessful candidates for career ladder positions were also interviewed as were members of the teacher leader

selection committees at each school. In the spring and during initial data analysis in the summer and fall of 1985, emerging themes and issues were checked with participants for the explanatory value of preliminary conclusions.

Analysis

Data analysis for the study followed procedures of established case study and naturalistic research (Guba & Lincoln, 1983; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Data from both sites was first read through and issue coded. Following a second reading of all data for each school, data reduction resulted in an initial list of fourteen major issues which was then displayed in time-series charts and school matrices (individual by theme, theme by time); patterns were matched together for major career and work themes and compared to job redesign, career, and teacher work literature. This process resulted in the three major sections of the analysis section of the paper that follows. Conclusions were then drawn and checked using a process of data audit and referent checks across time and between schools. Triangulation of methods and sources was carefully followed in order to provide multiple sources of evidence for the study (Yin, 1985).

Initially, the study began as a investigation into the supervisory relationships emerging from career ladders, focusing on the rationale of a new leadership team in schools, peer supervision, and the district's emphasis on direct classroom observation as an evaluation tool. As the data developed in the two schools it became clear that the career ladder affected all relationships in the schools. First, the novice-teacher supervisor relationship could not be separated from the rest of the school because of the

strong influence of school-wide professional and interaction norms that imposed themselves on the supervision. Second, the roles career ladder teachers were required to fill were nebulous when transferred from job descriptions devised in planning meetings to practice in the schools. Third, the leadership of principals and district administrators strongly influenced perceptions of teachers at each study site. Fourth, as an incentive for teachers, career ladder work became a part of the life of the school and was criticized for not being different from the status quo in important ways. However, career ladders underwent intense pressure from the school culture to involve tasks that were comfortable and familiar. Finally, the district evaluation system and its relationship to career ladder tasks, selection processes, and acceptance was strong. Some teachers saw career ladders as a thinly disguised attempt to implement merit pay, increase administrative control, or get rid of inadequate teachers. An ambiguity in the suspicions against merit pay emerged; the norm that career ladders should "reward the best teachers" was voiced repeatedly. The findings of the study were consequently not limited to peer supervision and leadership patterns.

Findings

In the findings section of the paper the data is presented by major emergent theme at each site. Following theme and data description, findings from the two sites are compared and analyzed. The three main themes influencing career ladder implementation at the two sites were career ladder tasks and educational impact, teacher opportunities for authority and decision-making, and career incentives.

Career Ladder Tasks and Educational Influence

Because the career ladder investigated in the study was a job redesign effort, the tasks performed by career ladder teachers and their perceived importance for education in the school became very important to people. The school-wide influence of their work, effects on communication patterns in the school, morale, and the supervisory efforts of teacher leaders played a significant part in the developing patterns observed in both schools.

School-wide Impact. School-wide impact of career ladders emerged for several major reasons. First, the ultimate goal of any school reform in the society is a positive impact on education, whether that be through the attraction of a more talented work force, through programs, or through supervision, evaluation, and reward systems. The effect of the career ladder on the school as a whole was thus an important issue to the teachers and administrators.

At South, the importance of the career ladder teachers as a resource pool for other faculty members was emphasized. In his journal, one probationary teacher noted in early October:

> Every school has some very good teachers. Career ladders allows me to tap their knowledge and experience. Every school now can have a resource pool within its own faculty focused on improvement of the entire school.

Another teacher commented in her journal in November:

> I've seen some teacher specialists really in action--the in-service program is meeting my needs. We had a session on goal setting for the year with a specialist. It really helped. I can see that career ladders is helping my teaching, which in turn, must be helping the students.

Describing the early efforts of the teacher leaders in his school, the principal commented in October that:

> The teacher leaders and specialists generate many school level goals. This brings them from the isolation of the classroom . . . to involvement. In this way we have better recognized our strengths and allow for new resources to have an influence in the school. . . . More than anything, I believe that the career ladder identifies a resource at the teacher level for school innovation. The superintendent and principal do not have the power to change educational practice alone. They do not have the impact on the behavior of many professionals required to substantially change practice in a profound manner alone. Administrative fiat cannot change education. For example, the teacher leaders and faculty working together chose outcome based education and in-service training for a goal for career ladders this year.

Teacher leaders also felt the necessity of influencing their school. In September, one teacher leader made this journal entry:

> It has been great to have some time to look at the educational process from a distance. The students aren't around and curriculum planning and lesson design are more objective than when students are breathing down your neck. The teachers all began the year not quite sure whether they wanted to come back early or not, but once we were all here and working the attitude changed to one of gratitude for the extra time to get things done. AND we're being paid for it! I find myself looking at [my subject] as it relates to the entire school experience of a student rather than something that is separate and apart from the rest of the school. It is neat to start thinking how music and English might combine or . . . speech, etc. Isn't it great to knock things like that around in your mind? You bet it is and I wouldn't be doing it if I weren't here as a teacher leader working days before the students arrive.

Another teacher leader, describing his efforts to marshall, nourish, and revise a major curriculum and instructional area argued that his efforts were benefitting his own teaching but, more importantly, the educational program of the entire school. By April, he was describing his involvement in curriculum implementation as a "headache".

The teacher leaders at South were determined to control their own work. They met on a regular periodic basis to discuss the needs of the school and their own role in it on four Saturday mornings during the year. In their April conference their concern for school-wide instructional issues was evident.

> [School-wide responsibility] hasn't been pushed on us. We have done it because we have wanted to do it, because it is benefitting the school. There are great benefits for all of us in this school as a whole if we can get the [program] to work. That is why we want it to work.

Their interaction was dominated by problem-solving.

> If the teachers each took five [students] it wouldn't be that big a thing, or even ten. They could simply call them in for ten minutes and say, you need to understand, you have got a clean sheet now, everything is taken off. But last time the records say that you got seventy-three demerits. You need to understand now that this is what is going to happen.
>
> I guess we all take upon ourselves this discipline program, which is a school thing, and that is about as much responsibility there as in anything we do.
>
> In the discipline policy there are so many vague things. We should clear it up by re-doing it to include what the teachers want when we present it to them. . . . And see how they accept it.

Their interest in students was also evident in their problem-solving interactions. During one conference, a teacher leader expressed his concern about "those kids that the program really isn't working for". A lively dialogue about the behavioral modification alternatives they might explore ensued.

The school was not devoid of critical voices, however. In an interview in the spring, the same teacher who had praised the potential of career ladders as a resource for the teachers in the school described them as having no impact on the school that he could specifically describe. Then he added:

> They will probably tell you that they worked with some people and that they did this or that and that they accomplished x-number of things. But as far as I can see they haven't accomplished anything.

At West, participants were also concerned with the school-wide impact of the career ladder job redesign effort. Early in October the principal expressed his expectations explicitly:

> School goals should be related closely to classroom goals. The principal is the leader of that team, and we need a closer relationship. . . . This would include instructional processes, in-service, and other involvement. We should meet the needs of the school as the staff perceives them and should seek to find out what those perceptions are through surveys, talking together at lunch, conferences, etc.

The interview, journal, and observation data were far less positive at West than at South. One teacher specialist recorded in his journal in November:

> I talked to a tenured teacher today who expressed resentment that they were teaching a class in an area they were unqualified and uncertified to teach in <u>because</u> [emphasis in the original] a teacher leader who had been teaching that class in previous years was now free that period doing career ladder work. This was an aspect of the career ladder I had never thought about. This will be a recurring problem.

Career ladders at West got off to a rocky start. The perception of teachers throughout the school was ambivalent--they really enjoyed being together as a faculty and as professional teachers to work on school and classroom problems at the beginning of the year, but they were uncertain about the efficacy of career ladder teacher tasks for the school's overall educational effort. Early in October, a journal entry recorded:

> A note on one aspect of career ladders that has been very positive. Non-teaching days prior to the opening of school have been very beneficial to all. These have been gratefully received by most teachers. I had the opportunity to do some curriculum development, classroom management planning, materials preparation, and preparing for that first day of school. I've never felt so positive and so prepared as I did at the beginning of this school year.

Those most deeply involved in career ladders began to feel some school-wide benefits early in the fall. One teacher leader, in an interview in October, expressed her surprise at one benefit of participation:

> I certainly understand many things about the school I never understood before. I have had the chance to know what is going on several times already this year when teachers have been complaining about things when they don't have enough information about things.

I have been able to tell them what is actually happening a couple of times and people have felt better.

However, by April and May, some of the initial skepticism was replaced by praise for the specific efforts of some career ladder teachers. Retrospectively, one probationary teacher praised the school climate/morale building efforts of the teacher leaders:

> The teacher leaders themselves have had certain responsibilities in connection with school climate. . . . I think those have helped. For example, at the beginning of the year, I thought this was great, we went [to a resort] and spent one whole day up there getting to know each other [while we worked on school problems]. We had eleven new people in the school including the principal and then ten other new teachers. That day at [the resort] made all the difference.

The specific responsibilities of some career ladder teacher specialists also received praise in March:

> In a discussion at lunch teachers felt the positive school climate teacher specialist position, the enrichment week and others had definitely contributed to a better school climate and a more positive attitude on the part of students. I feel very strongly that that is the case. I feel our school is a much more positive place for our students to be--at least from their point of view--than ever before. The emphasis on excellence in academics and citizenship has completely turned our school around I feel. The dinks [sic] are no longer the idols of the school.

During the year before career ladders were instituted, the faculty and administration of West had decided that they wanted more positive reinforcement for students who were doing a good job academically and in their behavior, so that when the job descriptions for teacher specialists were formulated, they were all ready to request a teacher to organize an enrichment week of extra curriculum and a special positive reinforcement program for the year. These two programs received kudos from the faculty and administration in March. Said the principal:

> The [enrichment teacher specialist] has worked her head off to get this enrichment week put together. We are just about there. She has got the course descriptions now and is putting it all on the

> computer. We are going to register the kids probably Friday. Many teachers said, "Oh that is a nice thing," but they didn't realize how we got it.

The teacher specialist role assigned to help reward students for academic achievement and behavior was also a smashing success. After describing an elaborate system of prizes for citizenship, attendance, and academic achievement, students of the day, and special activities that students could earn by getting outstanding grades or outstanding citizenship marks, the teacher in charge of the program because of the career ladder summed up his experience:

> Taking them all together I feel that they really had an impact on our school. The students came to think of the school as more of a fun place where teachers are interested in students. Their achievement is recognized and good behavior is recognized. . . . I like the approach of having two avenues [for the rewards]. . . , because there are some students who are never going to get a 3.7 GPA but who are great students and great contributors. Overall I think that it has been a tremendous program. We didn't have career ladders last year and one of the big differences that I have seen is in the unified effort of positive reinforcement for students. . . . I think that has been great. It has been on a school-wide basis, not just each teacher doing their own thing her and there and not just a once in a while program saying, "Let's do this for the kids."

Another teacher, arguing in an interview that the emphasis on the supervision of nontenured teachers seemed at times oppressive, felt that even more emphasis could be given to the solution of school-wide problems through the career ladder:

> I think less emphasis should be given to helping non-tenured teachers and more on . . . helping the school as a whole. . . . Some of the pressure should be put on some of the older teachers in the school as well. If we are trying to help education as a whole--really look at it--we non-tenured teachers are trying to do a good job.

Expressing his surprise at developments during the year, one teacher remarked in the spring:

> I think that the teacher specialists and probably the teacher leader positions are helpful in a way that we probably never realized they would be. That is that the teachers in those positions become involved in the school more in depth and put a little extra into their relationship with the administration and other teachers with the school. You start to feel like, gee, I am more of a part of this school and I am important in this school. I can do something to help this school, and I can do good things. It makes you feel better about yourself and your position in the school even though the $900.00 is a joke.

Communication. Communication between teachers and between the administration and teachers was also an element of the tasks and influence of career ladders in the school. Communication issues took several forms--a sense of fairness, the representativeness of decisions, the selection of career ladder teachers, and the legitimate critical analysis of tasks and individual effort expended in this first year of career ladders.

At South, communication quickly became an important issue. When the faculty first met in the fall, many ideas were bandied about. One probationary teacher remarked in her journal in September, in reference to the previous spring's selection procedure:

> I felt like the implementation of the programs was quite fair. I felt like [teacher] representatives and administrators were really willing to listen to all of the ideas, and the fact that anyone could apply for a teacher specialist position reassured me that new teachers were not being discriminated against. But I do feel that there was little choice for the principal and selection committee to chose from in deciding on the teacher leaders. The feeling was--the older teachers have paid their dues. But I'm not sure they would've made the best teacher leaders.

One of the major issues in early communication at South involved a simple question, "What is a career ladder?" A veteran of the district who later became a teacher leader said:

> When I first heard about [the career ladder] it sounded like merit pay to me and I opposed it. As the task force committee met through the year I gradually changed my mind. The most important aspect of the committee was that it contained a teacher from each school in the district. I felt good as things progressed--particularly as the

> job descriptions for our own school were written. I really liked the process used for forming a selection committee by voting for them. I did not plan to apply until I began to see what things the teacher leaders were going to do here, and I felt that it would help my career. . . .

The frequency and the intensity of communication in the faculty at South grew.

> In faculty meeting we have gone from one faculty meeting a month to three a month and a departmental meting on the fourth. During one of the meetings [the principal] leads a discussion. We really talk about issues and don't just get announcements. During the other faculty meetings the teacher leaders and we have more discussion and less of the plop something down and tell us. Even though there were many hurt feelings in the spring, people feel good here now. We are all feeling very positive about the whole thing.

These faculty meetings were not simply tacit radifications of policy. A probationary teacher described them in April as forums in which:

> [W]e talk a lot about what is going on and what modifications we need to make in the ladder. Sometimes they become very vigorous.

The expectations developing at South for increased ability to communicate on professional issues were expressed in October and then again in April by teacher leaders in the school:

> I expect myself to be the vehicle where neat information that has always been there about teaching and schools really can be shared and communicated. We didn't have career ladders my first year here and the attitude I perceived was that the experienced teachers felt "why should we make it any easier on you?" This is an opportunity for new teachers to share ideas and our commonality.

> Our ability to communicate information from the district is much better this year because specific individuals are in charge of specific kinds of things. In the past you had to trust the principal to bring back whatever was appropriate and whatever [he] thought was appropriate to tell us. There were times where other schools found out things that we didn't find out about just because our principal thought that it wasn't important.

On a less happy note, still addressing the importance of communication during changes of great magnitude, one probationary teacher declared in an October journal entry:

> Last week, faculty meeting was held, but only for teacher leaders and teacher specialists. I would really like to know what happened and what was discussed. I think the teacher specialist over my department is supposed to communicate the information to my department, but she never does. It would be nice to be informed on the issues.

At West the issue of communication took a somewhat different tone. During an informal conversation in November one of the probationary teachers who expected to be working closely with career ladder teachers during the year indicated that she did not learn about the process the teacher leaders wanted to use for observation until she overheard a conversation in the teachers' workroom. She said that "the teacher leaders' work is very invisible and she doesn't even overhear conversations about it" very much. Her impression was that none of the people she interacted with directly were talking much about the career ladder. Her biggest concern was about teacher leader use of their extra preparation period--a time designated for career ladder work. This lack of understanding about the nature of career ladder teachers' work was shared by other West teachers. As late as April, one teacher indicated that she was "not sure what other areas [the teacher leaders] had as their specific assignments. It hasn't been obvious."

The lack of communication severely hampered career ladder activities at West. In October, one teacher leader indicated that they "did not know what to do, what tasks to perform to move on to the next stage". She asked what they should be doing and indicated that their additional preparation time was being used to do their own preparation for teacher, not for teacher leader activities as supervisors or mentors. This early confusion prompted one teacher to remark in March that "particularly with some of these teachers, they should have the description [of their duties] carefully written down--as far as who has what, etc.".

Communication failed the career ladder at West following the direct observation of teaching as well. In May, one novice teacher complained:

> I think they should, whenever they come to visit a class, say what they have to say, good or bad. I always wondered afterwards what they thought. That would be my major recommendation [about observations]. I would think that they should be doing more for the school, and yet none of the teachers I talk to seem to know what they are doing.

A small group of teachers at West attempted to bring to the attention of their colleagues and the district career ladder task force a set of concerns about the assumptions and implementation of career ladders that they felt were not receiving sufficient hearing. One teacher, an experienced veteran in the district, said that if the researcher was not getting lots of complaints, she was not asking the right questions or talking with the right people. Late in November he talked angrily about his frustrations. He strongly implied that a snow job was in the works.

This same sense of frustration over communication was felt by the teachers' representative from West on the district career ladder task force. She expressed her frustration in March and then again in April of 1985:

> I bring suggestions to our task force. Some are considered, I don't thin we are blackballed just because I am from [West]. I think probably they do listen. But I don't know how to explain this, maybe we just don't feel as appreciated for the questions that we are trying to raise--not to undermine the system or the program--but that there are some valid concerns that people have. Sometimes I think that the feeling people have is that our questions are undermining or just being negative for negative sake. . . . We are the black sheep of the district.

Another teacher expressed his concern about the efforts of West's representatives to bring the hard questions associated with career ladders before the task force:

> She says that she goes and gives them recommendations, but nobody listens, and nobody hears it. They don't seem to have the same concerns.

The principal at West was open to discussions about worries in the faculty. Early in March he remarked:

> Discussions have helped us recognize some feelings--maybe not so much helpful for this year, but as we project into another year. Feelings are a real concern. I have got the goals of these teacher leaders; I never gave them to the teachers. I didn't think they would want them. In yesterday's discussion with the task force, someone said, "if they only new what the goals were." Oh, dummy, give them the goals. That type of thing has been going on.

He also knew that other schools were experiencing some difficulties:

> I have two neighbors, one that teaches as [each of the high schools], and I can tell you what they are telling me. When they talk about school, it is not as rosy as . . . some people. Finally people sensed that [the superintendent] was serious about evaluating [the career ladder] and not just hearing roses. Pretty quick people started to gab over here.

Communication at West was also facilitated by the career ladder. Teacher leaders expressed satisfaction at their increased involvement in the information system of the school and the scope of understanding of the total educational picture it gave them.

> It is nice to know what is going on. . . . Of course, there are some things we can't know, but to be part of the information and whenever you have ownership in anything, I think you feel better about it. And to share that with other people--this is why the principal had to do this. They are more receptive because they are hearing it from a colleague. Maybe they would never have heard it from the Indian Chief. I think this [communication] has dispelled some of the anxiety that permeates throughout our faculty, and I guess all faculties. To have a piece of the action is a good feeling.

Morale. The effects of career ladder on morale were evident in both schools. Whenever studies have explored job redesign efforts, people's feelings about themselves and their work have played an important part. At South, the immediate effect of career ladders on morale was euphoric. Early in the fall of 1984, teachers at South were exclaiming about the positive

effects of career ladder activities on teacher morale. One teacher's journal entry in November indicated:

> The morale at school is really high this year. The new discipline policy that was put together by the teacher leaders and adopted by all of the teachers during the extra days has made a difference. Also, there just seems to be more of an interest in one another.

The morale issue was complex--reflecting impressions about personal and professional worth. One teacher specialist at South indicated in October that she felt that career ladders would "help teachers feel more professional and appreciated". She also felt that it would make them feel "less like a dead end job" and would "keep things interesting so that you do not have to do the same thing every year". The element of choice was vital for her. Teachers could "do more if they want to" and those "who don't do not have to". This sense that career ladders could create an atmosphere of collegiality and cohesion was illustrated in other data. In an interview in April, one probationary teacher credited the teacher leaders with having "done a lot to make the faculty a more cohesive group". Another teacher indicated that "it has just made the faculty feel a lot higher morale, a lot closer and a lot more professional".

At South, even the teachers who personally opposed the reform admitted that the atmosphere generated by career ladder activities in the first year was positive. One veteran teacher described the career ladder effect on morale this way in October 1984:

> Career ladders . . . have raised morale in the faculty at [South] as a whole substantially for most teachers, but not for me. . . . I guess it provides an aura of professionalism. I like the emphasis on teachers--the expectation of the implementation of teaching ideas, the increase in morale, improved use of instructional methods. I expect it to make better teachers, and that will provide for better student learning.

Involvement in the ladder seemed to influence teachers' attitudes substantially. As early as October, the principal expressed worries that teachers who were not involved in the ladder were mounting "serious opposition" to the career ladder. Because there were only two career ladder "steps"--teacher specialist and teacher leader--participation rates were often viewed as too low, even though 10% of teachers in the district were teacher leaders and 40% were teacher specialists.

Several factors help explain the qualified but generally positive response of teachers at South to the career ladder in its first year. First, the process used to develop the features of the ladder involved teachers from the very beginning. One teacher specialist, comparing her experience to that of her sister who taught in another district in the state, indicated that:

> I can see it was done better here. We started early. The discussions were open. We can discuss problems. I don't think it's a threat to people here. There are also more opportunities.

A probationary teacher not new to the district expressed her support this way:

> I think that all of the career ladder discussions have made us more aware of our profession. For me it has made me a little bit prouder to be a teacher. So I think that my teaching has improved. I think that most of the teachers in the district have an awareness of the fact that we are doing some good things in the district. Most of the teachers that I have talked to do enjoy the idea that we are moving ahead, that we are improving. I have one friend who moved here last year. . . . She moved here from [another district in the state]. She said there is a really big difference in the attitudes between the two. Here most of the teachers seem to be looking forward and really working to improve. It has made the teachers a lot more progressive.

Morale is an illusive concept. Feeling good about ones work, ones profession, and ones performance involves a complex set of variables. However, at South, the combination of progressivism, reform, and hopefulness came together at the right time in the right combinations during the first

year of career ladder implementation. When a probationary teacher was having problems with a difficult student, he indicated that:

> [The teacher leader] was there, I guess more to give me moral support than anything. I felt good about that. It is nice to have someone else. I have heard that a lot from people. It is a variable that people have noticed that is different from other years. Not that the people are different, but just that the structure makes it more likely to happen.

The assistant principal at South offered insight into some of the dynamics:

> I'm not sure what affect [career ladders] will have on morale, but there seem to be fewer problems and concerns. I don't think we can forget that things look better at the beginning of anything new. We can't discount the improvement influence of all this attention at the beginning.

Additionally, the attention that teachers, long neglected as a legitimate professional group by the society at large, received during this first intensive year of the career ladder implementation at South provided a glimmer of hope that their devotion to the education of the citizens of the future was not a sacrifice offered in darkness and in vain.

The early effects on morale of the implementation of career ladders at West were diametrically different than those at South. While the principal at West recognized that failure to rise in the career ladder was having negative effects on teachers, the teacher leaders were calling the effects "devastating". In October, one teacher leader remarked:

> My greatest fear is for the career teachers outside the ladder. . . .[T]hey may slip through the cracks. Our influence should be school-wide, including non-career ladder teachers. In don't know how that will happen. One of our teachers withdrew [his] application for career ladders. He was a great teacher and is really hurting personally. I think his teaching has suffered.

Complaints about the lack of effort from career ladder activities occupied the interaction between principal and teachers at West. One teacher who had lodged a complaint with the principal in the fall described her feelings:

> I felt like a little narc [sic], because I had heard through the grapevine that one of the teacher leaders was using one of [his] preps [sic] in the shop. And one of the custodians confirmed that and said, "Yea, I have seen him." So I went to [the principal] and said, "I don't want to be a tattletale, but if this is happening, it really makes me mad." I resent that, because that is not what this time is supposed to be for. . . . [The principal] was very cooperative, he said, "If this is happening, I will find out about it."

The faculty at West developed the impression that they were odd. The task force representative from the school indicated in March that:

> We just have this reputation at the district meetings as being the rebellious, radical school. I think when it gets back to [West], or we voice concerns and they seemingly are ignored, it has the effect of saying, "Well, they are not listening to us because we aren't going along with the crowd. [We feel that] they just choose to ignore us. One article in the paper that appeared really raised hackles because [the superintendent] didn't mention our concerns.

The negative morale at West was self-reinforcing. By early spring one teacher said that "in our faculty meetings it seems like everybody is always griping about [career ladders]". Expressing frustration, the district career ladder task force representative said in March:

> Why is it that our school is always the gripe source. When I go back to the meeting on the district level everybody else seems to be very happy about how [it] is working.

Even at West, the "black sheep" of the district, morale was not entirely devastated by career ladders. Some teachers talked about their sense of support, the presence of a back-up system to help them when they were trying to do their best work. One teacher said in March that:

> I have felt like with my teacher leader her primary obligations were her classroom. I don't think that she thought about what I need as a primary purpose. What I am saying is that she is concerned, but she isn't primarily concerned about my classroom but her own.

However, another teacher indicated that the teacher leaders had provided him a valuable resource on which to draw.

> If I am not sure the lesson is going to go . . ., I just walk in and say, help! And I have done this with other teachers. When somebody is around I grab them. Tell me what I do?

By the spring of 1985, teacher leaders felt that the control over initiatives by teachers was beginning to turn the tide on the frustrated feelings at West:

> There are many benefits such as public relations with parents, positive attitudes are up, and programs are teacher initiated rather than administration initiated. The teachers view these things better because they were developed by one of us, in their terminology, instead of one of them.

Teacher leader and teacher specialist work. The tasks and work of career ladder teachers played a significant role in the development of attitudes and interaction patterns in career ladders in the first year of implementation. Career ladder teachers in the district were assigned significant supervisory and curriculum responsibilities. Participation in these tasks shaped, in large measure, teachers attitudes about career ladders.

At South, the teacher leaders influenced the talk about and assessment of career ladders. The contrast between their previous experiences with teaching supervision and the structured opportunities for interaction under career ladders was apparent in the reflections of a teacher leader:

> My first year the principal came into my class only once. In fact, my former student teaching supervisor from the university visited my class more often than anyone my first year, and we would talk about my teaching. . . . After the first day of school I kept expecting someone to come into my class and say, "Well, how did it go?" but no one did. I finally decided that I would just have to do my best and hope that I would improve and notice my own mistakes and be self-critical.

As early as October, a teacher indicated in an interview that the career ladder structure had changed their interaction patterns. What the structure gave her was formal support:

> I feel like I could go to any teacher leader or teacher specialist and say, "This is my problem," and get help. Since there has been

> this change . . . , a lot more discussion takes place in this faculty.

However, teacher leaders learned that direct observation and feedback about teaching was sometimes hard to give. Teaching is a very personal act, closely tied up with many people's sense of self. A teacher leader described his struggle with the observation process in April:

> Teaching is so much a part of ones being. "I am a teacher." They really tie personal feelings into what they do as teachers. If you openly of blatantly attack what someone does as a teacher it can be very devastating for those individuals who have not learned to disassociate behaviors from personalities. . . . So a lot of what I do is talk about that [personal connection] a bit. I point out that I hope [they] realize that [they're] a great person and I appreciate what [they] do. All of us do [things] at times that we would change.

As observations became more frequent in the fall, a probationary teacher recorded this experience with direct observation by a teacher leader:

> [She] came in during my advanced French class. She said, afterward, that it would be difficult for an observer who didn't speak French to know what was going on. Maybe, but I think you could always tell if I were using PET [principles of effective teaching], even if I were teaching Pushtu sign language. I wondered if I would be nervous when she came, but it really didn't matter. . . . I'm a good teacher.

The use of a closely defined set of classroom "principles" and lesson design characteristics to structure the direct observation of teaching was implemented by the district. These principles, known in the district as PET (principles of effective teaching), were also used in the regular evaluation observations by principals for several years before the career ladder was designed and were part of a program of instructional improvement being vigorously pursued. They came to dominate the post-observation conferences by teacher leaders at South. The majority of teachers seemed to feel that teacher leader observations were focused not on evaluation or judgment but on

their professional development. In a spring interview, a probationary teacher described an experience with one of the teacher leaders this way:

> She came in [while] I was teaching a boring lesson. I was so mad at those kids, because we were working on some grammar, and they had forgotten everything. So I had started the lesson and didn't have time to switch. She stayed the whole period. When she left, I thought, "I am a crummy teacher." But when I got her comments back and her observation sheet, I felt really good about things. I felt like she was really there to help me. She wasn't evaluating me as a teacher but trying to help. When she left [after the conference] I felt really confident about what I had done. She did give me some pointers, maybe some things that I could have done, but mostly she talked about the positive things that had gone on in the classroom.

Another teacher leader described specific instructional techniques he felt he had assisted probationary teachers with in teaching to an objective; he described how the teacher leaders and specialists had come to structure the staff development activities and in-service training they were in charge of around issues raised during observations in classrooms:

> Because [we] can . . . be in the classroom to observe what teachers are doing, we can find specific areas that several teachers might be having problems with [or want to concentrate on]. I touch base [with the other teacher leaders] quite a bit on that. There is a lot of talking back and forth. . . . In terms of my contribution, being able to provide in-service for the staff, that knowledge of what is really happening in classrooms gives me a very strong position.

This involvement helped many teachers with years of experience. A teacher new to the district described his assessment of the teacher mentor duties of teacher leaders and the observation structure used by the principal in October:

> My previous experience was very different. I received no supervisory help, zero help, and the idea that the evaluation process was supposed to help teachers was non-existent. I have experience more help, trust, and involvement so far at [South] this year than in my previous six years combined. . . . I feel that a fellow teacher who understands what we all go through will be assigned to evaluate ways that I can improve my instructional skills and people relationships, so that I can become a better teacher. I expect teaching to be more enjoyable as a result. I also expect

that it will lead to better relationships between teachers and between teachers and the administration.

A pattern of observation, comments about the structure of the lesson plan and instructional techniques that seemed to fit into the PET model, praise, and a few suggestions began to develop in the post-observation conferences recorded by the teacher leaders. Often commenting that "research tells us" a given technique or social interaction pattern facilitates or limits teaching effectiveness, the teacher leaders attempted to involve the teachers they supervised in substantive discussions about teaching. Assessments by the probationary teachers and others were usually positive, though a few teachers remarked that an over-reliance on positive feedback sometimes made the conferences more seem more ceremonial to them than helpful.

The use of PET to structure observations sometimes created a very narrow view of teaching, however, even causing some conflicts with other instructional and curriculum programs in the school. Stilted references to "feeling tone", "teaching to an objective", "motivational level", "knowledge of results", and raising the "level of concern", even when it was stretching the point, appeared in the conference data. When other forms of teaching were going on, the teacher leaders sometimes found it difficult to offer useful comments. In classrooms where individualized instruction, outcome based instruction, computer managed instruction, or group tasks were being used to structure the learning activities, the teacher leaders would often say that they had not been able to record many observations about the classroom interactions because the teachers "were not teaching". One teacher leader repeatedly asked teachers to invite [him] back when they were "teaching a lesson" to the class so that there would be something to observe. Another found the lack of direct whole group instruction frustrating and asked

teachers to plan some system requiring the whole class to be involved together at the beginning of the period every day, some form of "anticipatory set" and "teaching to an objective".

However, even though the system seemed rigid and forced at times, many teachers found the feedback they received to be useful. Throughout the year, in interviews, during informal conversations, in their journals, and in their comments to the teacher leaders during recorded conferences, teachers commented that they appreciated the chance to talk about their teaching and receive substantive feedback about classroom interactions. Some teachers indicated that they felt the teacher leader was in a non-judgmental position that made it possible to be of more assistance with professional development--different than having the principal "come in and tell [him] if he's a good or bad teacher". Several teachers, still probationary but in their second of third year of teaching, commented that they really wished they could have had the career ladder assistance with their instruction during their own first year of teaching--even with tasks as instrumental as completing their official roll book correctly for the state audit. One journal entry in early December was illustrative of these reactions:

> Last week [one of our teacher leaders] came in to observe. I was somewhat apprehensive about having another teacher, especially a teacher not certified in my area of expertise, come into my classroom and make observations on my teaching capabilities. I felt a bit resentful, because I know that [she] only visits the classrooms of non-tenured teachers, and I would have appreciated help my first year of teaching rather than my third!
>
> During her stay in my room (one period) I was nervous, but [she] helped me to feel more at ease as time went by. We were working on writing poetry. AT the end of class I asked for students to volunteer to read their work. After a few students had shared their work, [she] shared hers. I felt good to know that she had been participating in my activity.
>
> After class, [she] set up a time to have a conference; she pointed out that her job was <u>not</u> to evaluate. . . . She gave me a chance to ask her some questions and to discuss my concerns with

> her. My feelings at that time were those of wishing I had had someone like this to help me through my first year of teaching. First-year teachers often feel so alone as they enter their classroom each day to face a mountain of paper work and student discipline challenges. [The teacher leader] can be extremely valuable--a "shoulder to cry on", and a source of advice and comfort in a hectic world.

As word spread among teachers in the school that the teacher leaders were giving useful feedback about teaching, several experienced teachers began to contact them and invite them to their classrooms to observe for specific instructional issues or just to see what they were doing. From late October on, teachers would occasionally request assistance of the teacher leaders, taking the initiative themselves. One teacher leader remarked that she found this development professionally gratifying. "Now they are starting to come to me. . . which is flattering. I am glad to help out if I can. That is really all I do." A growing trust and reliance on the professional assistance of the teacher leaders persisted in most faculty members, even though the messages they delivered were not always sugar coated.

The most widespread complaint at the end of the school year was that there had been far too little direct classroom involvement from the teacher leaders; they had not been able to give enough contact and feedback. Teachers also felt that, even though formal observation and structured feedback was sometimes stressful, it was more helpful to them than informal visits and casual talks when they could grab them, in the hall or in the teachers' lounge, because the feedback was more consistent. The teacher leaders, on the other hand, all stated repeatedly that they felt their informal visits with teachers were extremely helpful, perhaps more helpful overall than formal observations. South's mentor teachers received considerable praise from the probationary teachers.

At West the experience with teacher leaders as supervisors and mentors was assessed less positively for many months. In her journal in the fall, a new teacher recorded one awkward incident:

> [The teacher leader] observed fourth period today. The students were unaware that she was there. It was a stiff, uncomfortable situation. I was afraid to reprimand them the way I usually would because Judy was there. Their students were embarrassed, as was I, when she got up to leave.
>
> She [held a conference] with me concerning the observation. She was nice enough to pick out the positive points of the period! I will know better than to be intimidated by her presence next time.

Other experiences were equally disconcerting. The teacher leaders indicated in the fall that they were unsure exactly what they should be doing, even though they had received training in direct observation during the summer. The only teacher leader who actively pursued observations early in the year met strong resistance from several teachers; scuttlebutt and rumor flew around the school that the teacher leader was being overbearing and difficult. Unlike the teachers at South, several teachers at West expressed the belief that one visit from a teacher leader was more than enough torture for any new teacher to have to endure. "A mentor can also be a tormentor," commented one experienced teacher.

The teacher leaders were concerned. In interviews in October, all three of them expressed a sense of alienation from other faculty members. In a September journal entry, one teacher leader recorded:

> There are some real feelings that the teacher leaders have a cush [sic] job and that they really don't have to do much, but I have seen that a lot of things go on behind the scene and may not be real noticeable to the majority of teachers. It is therefore important that some specific tasks are given and that the faculty realize that things are going done. . . . I have noticed that the teachers I am supervising often come to me to find out the nit-picky things that never really get explained. I like that feeling that they know that I can and will help.

Because of the intensively negative responses of two probationary teachers to some aspects of teacher leader observation and supervision, the teacher leaders decided as a group to delay their classroom visits--first until the end of the quarter, then until after Christmas. While the teacher leaders at South were each concentrating on different areas of school need (programs, staff development, supervision), the teacher leaders at West had identical job descriptions and decided to do the same things at the same time to avoid any more complaints about the inconsistency of involvement with different faculty members. An anxiety ridden probationary teacher described her feelings against career ladders explicitly:

> Sometimes you get the feeling you're going to be watched a lot under career ladder. It causes anxiety. The supervision needs to be clarified more so evaluation doesn't leave us on the line all the time.

Highly vocal and critical feedback stopped the teacher leaders dead in their tracks, even though many teachers wanted more involvement from them. After explaining that he "takes a lot of guff" from the other faculty members ("When you walk in the faculty lounge, conversations stop."), one teacher leader expressed his concern:

> Even though I'm a teacher leader I'm struggling with the concept of career ladders. I am concerned with the conflict between loyalty and honest criticism that I feel. Personally I feel both obligated as a teacher leader to be loyal to the school administration as part of the team and the need as a professional teacher to offer honest and constructive feedback and criticism. I'm not sure that they want me to be too honest. I enjoy the pay level and the freedom it offers me. I also have found working on broad school goals, workshops, and development opportunities to be professionally very rewarding.

There was also ample evidence that many teachers were willing and able to work with them. The lack of initiative on the part of teacher leaders irritated some teachers:

> The teacher leader seems to feel like he can't come in my class unless I invite him. He hasn't visited my class formally yet [late November]. I would like the contact to be a shared responsibility--not always my responsibility to invite him. They need to be about their job contacting, helping, observing, and getting into the instruction in the school. I also like having the opportunity to seek them out, however. My goal is to become a better teacher, and I hope the career ladder will help. I really enjoy teaching.

Another teacher commented in mid-October:

> [She]has held off coming, but I hear so much about . . . how good she is . . . that I would really like to interact with her more. I'm would like to see [her program] in action more and have more assistance from her. I need to work with her. She ha been very helpful whenever I have asked, but I would like to visit her classroom, also.

Commenting on the relationship of career ladders to teacher supervision and professional development, a teacher specialist remarked:

> Supervision in education was something superficial and limited for me. There was not much support and help coming from the few short visits others made to my class. I was left on my own. There are some disadvantages to that. . . . Maybe I could have avoided some of the pitfalls if I had had more help. Career ladder could provide the resources to help new teachers avoid those pitfalls before they occur.

Expressing his surprise about the early resistance and the teacher leaders' subsequent withdrawal from active observation and supervision in the fall, a teacher leader commented:

> My supervision is not evaluative [sic] in nature. I set up a pre-conference to a formal visit and always talk with them about their preferences about my visiting. I can not recall anyone expressing any negative feelings to me [directly] about my visits, though they probably save that for the faculty lunch room. I always had the impression that the teachers want someone to come in to their rooms.

The ambivalence in the faculty at West about career ladders the first of the year caused considerable confusion. While one group of faculty members was complaining about any observation/supervision from teacher leaders, others were critical of their lack of initiative and their absence from classrooms.

There was talk that the tapes of conferences being made for the study might be used against them. "Who sees those tapes?"

By late November all three teacher leaders expressed regret about their negativism early in the year. One teacher leader had visited with each of the teachers to whom she was assigned and expressed her increasing enjoyment of career ladders. "I am feeling good, more comfortable, about things now. We all are. We are having some good experiences." Positive experiences began to reshape the opinions of some faculty members:

> I've deeply appreciated having a teacher supervisor. She has been in a couple of times and I have asked her for help.

The supervision that did take place, however, though organized around PET because of the district instructional improvement plan, was far less structured and uniform. While this development gave the teacher leaders more flexibility and prevented them from feeling obligated to "come back when you're teaching", it also left some people feeling uncertain:

> From clinical supervision by my teacher leader I expect that she will consider this a daily responsibility to work with other teachers, not on her own teaching. There are problems if they are involved in evaluation of other teachers, and I would like to see evaluation separate from the teacher leader growth supervision. I want them to avoid the trap of forcing new teachers to conform to their personal taste rather than good teaching practice. I think we will achieve better and more objective supervision with set criteria for the teacher leaders to use. Unclear evaluation in really one of the greatest dangers I see in career ladders.

As the teacher leaders at West got into more classrooms, positive responses became evident in a growing number of faculty members (never all of them). The use of PET feedback, very similar to that used at South, began appearing in conferences and in observation notes. Teacher leaders also began talking about "stating your objective", "monitoring and adjusting", "anticipatory set", and "sponge activities". The language of PET appeared

more often in their interactions. Two December conferences by different teacher leaders illustrate the kind of interaction that was developing. A teacher leader said:

> You responded to individual students if it was relevant. And I noticed that you extinguished . . . disruptive behavior that would interfere with your content or with the flow. You . . . ignored it very nicely.

A conference with a probationary teacher revealed:

> I guess sometimes I give up, because I feel like I shouldn't have to babysit these kids. I shouldn't have to remind them every minute to be quiet.
>
> No you shouldn't, and there are techniques to help you not have to do that and classes where you don't have to. You should not proceed until you get . . . a good response.
>
> And so I guess sometimes, I give up on it. I suppose that is why I have come along and been kind of inconsistent.

The conference continued with specific mechanisms for dealing with a classroom full of junior high school students shared by the teacher leader and an appointment made to observe the teacher using one of the new techniques.

By mid-January, teachers began talking about the assistance they were receiving from teacher leaders. In a journal entry, one teacher specialist noted briefly, "I talked with a probationary teacher today who said he felt his teacher leader was doing a great job and was a big help to him."

Reports that teachers were approaching their teacher leaders for assistance became more frequent:

> I had a problem about a month ago with one of my classes. They just weren't making it with discipline. I felt like I could go and talk to [the teacher leader] about it. . . . [W]e sat down and talked; she gave me some suggestions. She seemed very caring, wanting to help. It was a really neat experience. I came back and put into practice some of the things she had said as well as what I determined I wanted to do. She was very interested in getting a report back and finding out how that was going. It was a good experience.

As the frequency of contact increased, so did the expectations of teachers. By late spring teacher leaders were not criticized so much for being too interfering as for not doing enough supervision. Some representative remarks from interviews illustrated the change:

> What she has said has been very helpful, but there has just not been enough as far as I am concerned . . . to do me good. Maybe she is so busy with others that she hasn't been able to get to me. I don't know. But I hadn't felt the affect, just because I haven't had enough observations.
>
> It's definitely helpful when they come in.
>
> Personally, it kind of gripes me that if they are being paid to do it, I am not receiving any help for that money they have been given. Maybe they are helping somebody else and I shouldn't feel that way. Maybe someone is reaping the benefits from what they are supposed to be doing.
>
> The conference I had was good just maybe to give me a little pat on the back and say, "yes, you are doing a good job and somebody noticed it." But I don't know that it helped me alter the way I taught or the way I did things, or the way I thought about things. . . . Some of the things [that were noted] went with the [PET] jargon, but it was just an accident, and I freely admit to that.

Others were more complimentary and seemed to have lower expectations about the number of observation visits they should have received:

> We had a post-conference. I don't know if we are going to do that or not this time. It is fun for me to see what is going on in the classroom through someone else's eyes, things that I am not even aware of. You just can't keep track of everything that is going on.

The teacher leaders expressed some frustration about the conflicting signals they received about their work during the course of the year.

> Half of them said, "I wish you had come in much, much more." One said that it would have helped more if she could have had the opportunity to come and see what I was doing or what some other teacher is doing in their classroom. So I set it up so that I taught one of her classes and she could see what I do.

Teacher leaders, in an attempt to make their contribution to the school more visible, also began substituting for teachers while they visited other

programs or participated in professional development activities in January. By the end of the year, this activity had also come under attack. Their work was seen as very expensive substitute teaching.

As at South, the teacher leaders at West expressed a preference for informal interaction with teachers, including supervision. They took considerable satisfaction in the contact they had with other teachers they felt was helpful:

> [The teachers] felt, "Here is someone that I can go to if I have a problem and I won't feel threatened." One of the things that has come out from teachers to me is that they said they felt comfortable about the suggestions either formally or informally. They just felt that any problem that they had they could come to me with, which I think is a real change from what has been in the past.
>
> One of the things I am enjoying most is that my teachers come to me and ask questions.
>
> I know how things are going just generally from some things [a teacher] has said. She has come in and had a question or shared that she tried something and it worked. It was more of an informal kind of an approach on how we set it up. It wasn't anything that was formal at all. I think that is why it worked.

But as at South, the probationary teachers to whom they were assigned felt that the feedback they got was more specifically helpful when the structure assured it. Only one of the seventeen probationary teachers in the school expressed a preference for more informal interaction.

> I don't think that I have learned anything or gotten . . . any ideas from informal interaction with the teacher leaders.
>
> I have had no informal contact on instruction, curriculum, or anything with the teacher leader. Just maybe if I asked something--not any more than I would with any other colleague. There hasn't been a designated role of teacher leader that I have seen really manifested.
>
> I only got feedback when he would come in and sit in the back [of the room] for a while if I talked to him. Then he would tell me something, but otherwise, I didn't hear anything about it.

> His work has not had much affect on my professional development because I haven't gotten any feedback. The one formal visit . . . I did learn some things but I think I could have gotten as much out of informal visits if he sat down and talked to me, but that hasn't happened so far [May].

At both South and West, the difficulty of assessing the impact of the career ladder activities using the perceptions of the participants in the early stages was clear. Teacher leaders, one at West and one at South, had vivid memories of specific ways in which they had assisted particular teachers. One teacher leader at each school chose to describe, as the person they felt they had helped the most, teachers who perceived their assistance as minimal to nil. The overall effect of the supervision efforts and tasks of teacher leaders and specialists on the education of students was vieved and second tier. A teacher at South provided a summary of the perceptions she held about the impact of career ladder tasks:

> I have seen the teacher leaders affect the teachers. So the teachers have affected the students' learning. But what the teacher leaders have done has been more on the teacher level and then that has been filtered down. . . . I had several teachers come up and say that [the in-service on critical thinking] has affected their teaching. [The teacher leader] has organized several of those.

Teacher Opportunities: Authority and Decision-making

Because the career ladder that was studied in the two schools emphasized job enlargement, new roles and responsibilities had to be designed and implemented. During administrative meetings, principals talked about their new roles as heads of school leadership teams; an organizational development consultant spent three days with them in the summer before implementation to help them confront authority and leadership issues. Social dynamics, a factor not to be ignored in job redesign, were complex during implementation of the career ladder in the two subject schools. Career ladder teachers were inventing their own roles as they went along. Even though job descriptions were developed at each school, there were no role models. Administrative leadership in each school and in the district influenced the attitudes about teacher leadership that developed. Important and long established cultural norms in the schools were violated by the career ladder; collegiality, cooperation, and sharing raised questions in many teachers' minds. Additionally, the relative power of the teacher leaders and the stresses caused when already established organizational authority structures clashed with the new career ladder caused stresses and shaped the development of expanded organizational opportunities for teachers.

Inventing a Role. Role invention proved a major challenge. Because the career ladder teacher tasks had, in many cases, never been performed by teachers in the schools before, there was not a clear cut idea of the time or effort that would be involved.

By April, while some teachers were criticizing the level of teacher leader contribution to their work, the teacher leaders were reflecting on the

manageability of their roles. In an interview, one teacher leader at South described her year's work:

> I think maybe the greatest contribution has been my outward support of what teachers are doing. I don't think I have had enough time with any of the teachers individually. I haven't been able to go back and revisit. . . . I am beginning to go back and revisit now. But if that is all I had had to do all year then I could have visited everybody, a am sure, three of four times by now. But you won't believe the kinds of things that I have been involved with that are time consuming. . . . I comes across, perhaps, as an excuse for not getting into the classroom more often. But I think if anybody had followed me around they would be avare that the time has not been vasted.

In their final leadership meeting for the year, other teacher leaders shared the same perspective:

> I have not really felt frustrated, but I have felt pressure in having the time to do all that I felt I should be doing. . . . May that is our fault, I don't know. But each of us perceives the job as being something different. And you want to do the best that you possibly can. I don't think that any of us planned on the time commitment that was going to be involved. My own feeling is that we must sit down, for each of our job descriptions, and cut back tremendously the amount that a teacher leader is expected to do.
>
> If you are supposed to do this in addition to teaching a full load of courses . . . it's just too much. One think with career ladder was that we were fearful of pulling good teachers out of the classroom. I guess we need to adhere to that.

When they explained their activities in a faculty meeting at South, the response of some faculty members surprised them; they were accused of trying to look good. It was selection time for career ladders again.

> If we don't [cut back] we are going to be guilty of what people are already accusing each other of, and that is stacking the deck [for the jobs]. And how am I supposed to come out looking like a rose when [some teachers] are willing to spend fourteen hours a day working on teacher leader things.
>
> I find myself a lot of times in a position of defending either the career ladder or teacher leaders. I didn't really expect this would be something I would have to do. As an example, the other day in faculty meeting we were talking about the career ladder and one of the teachers said, What is it the teacher leaders do that is so much more than teacher specialists to ge the money, the released time,

> and everything that they have?" He didn't know about all the things we do. . . . So as we began to outline those, he had that question satisfied; then he said, "If you are doing all those things and the money doesn't really equate to the time you are spending, then aren't you really doing us a disservice?"

The implication was clear; you are a rate buster.

Many job descriptions for leaders and specialists turned out to be inappropriate for the school or too vague to be useful. One teacher specialist described his frustration as "a little like I'm making up activities for myself". His colleagues responded empathetically, "That is right. I have got to show that I have earned this money, so he comes next door and says, 'Gosh, how would you like to develop a program with me?'"

A common accusation, but one that meant entirely different things to each person who registered it, was that career ladder teachers were spending too much time on administrative duties--things that administrators do. When asked what kind of things those might be the answers ranged from book keeping and scheduling to communication in the faculty. The teacher leaders at South struggled with the role ambiguity; what is an administrator; what is a teacher? In their spring planning they said:

> The [school-wide] discipline things that we have been doing--are we going to recommend next year that those be taken over by the administration or are we going to write that into the job description?
>
> Those should be done by the administration. But I don't think it is going to work; I don't think that the administration could handle it.

The need to insure consistency and make accountability possible cased pressure for very explicit job descriptions; the need to exercise professional judgment and leadership and creatively serve the needs of the school caused pressure for more conceptual and less specific roles.

> As we changed or as we went through the year we found that some of those job descriptions really didn't reflect the needs of the school. We have people doing things that are nice, perhaps, but they are not vital.

A final, more subtle, role issue arose for the career ladder teachers. People in the school and at the district began defining career ladders work in very familiar terms. Rather than new authority and decision-making discretion about instruction and curriculum in the schools, more and more of them were assigned as district curriculum specialists as well. Curriculum specialists have been around for a long time in district offices; it is not a substantial reform in teaching work. The following conversation took place between the teacher leaders at South:

> Right now my district responsibility is as the physical education specialist. I work with people at all levels.
>
> Basically, I'm doing the same thing with music. That is a big job.
>
> That is the reason I tend to say that if a person has one level of responsibility, either in their building or in the district, that should be it.
>
> What they've done is break it down--they have an arts specialist, a music specialist and three primary specialists in music. . . . They need to define the district roles so that people understand exactly what they are.
>
> The superintendent is talking about a teacher leader position on the district level. He is calling it a curriculum specialist.
>
> They really are calling it a curriculum specialist?

At West, the issue of career ladder teachers' roles heated up much more quickly than at South. As early as October, the teacher leaders were asking what they were supposed to be doing. One probationary teacher indicated that she had not heard career ladders mentioned between the opening week of school and the time the researcher arrived at the school for interviews. She got a note in her box the next day from her teacher leader asking when she could be

observed. Early attempts at classroom observations and supervision caused a blow up; later, teachers wanted to know why the teacher leaders were not in classrooms visiting more often. Early in October, a teacher leader expressed her frustration:

> Maybe we have waited too long. I am not sure how to apply the leadership role of career ladders. One of our teacher leaders has really jumped into it and made some people mad by telling one of the new teachers how he should dress every day.

In a conversation with a teacher specialist in November, which he recorded in his journal, she expressed the same frustrations:

> I talked to a teacher leader today who said she felt a little frustrated in her job in that she was a little unclear on exactly what she was supposed to be doing during her free period every day. She indicated she had been using some of that time doing work in her teaching area, not in career ladder work.

Describing the dilemma felt by the teacher leaders, one of them said:

> I'd like to help but I need to find a way to mentor without giving them the impression that I'm holier than thou in my attitude. I feel there is a potential for tension between expectations, standards, and helping behavior in our relationships. We finally asked the principal to emphasize repeatedly that we would not be evaluating these teachers. He told them in one career ladder meeting that they would be evaluating themselves in a meeting with him. I feel that is a great need for <u>trust</u> [emphasis hers].

Unlike the teacher leaders at South, the leaders at West did not organize to meet regularly, either alone or with the principal. Teachers in the school talked a lot about the difference in their behavior. In October, a teacher described those differences:

> One said, "If you need me I'm here." One said, "I'll be in and out. . . ." The third said, "I will be in 8-10 times to evaluate you." Roles need to be defined better. Is there a guideline?

They finally held a special meeting to discuss the conflicts and complaints they were receiving. The teacher leader who had initiated early observations described the experience as getting "blown out of the water". He later set up

individual meetings with all the probationary teachers he was assigned to to attempt to clear things up. Not all teachers were sympathetic about the lack of direction. Said one teacher in March:

> But you just think that they are sitting there using their two preparation periods for classroom preparation just because nobody told them what they should be doing. Well, let's take some initiative; let's go find out.

Reflecting back on the experience in February and March, teachers offered a variety of reasons for the shaky start. Working together in sensitive roles is difficult; the job descriptions need to be more specific; job descriptions are only part of the challenge.

> I think that maybe when we work with each other, it is really difficult--maybe just not having the practice. We want to be so objective, but nice. Especially when you work with people, and they are your colleagues. I think that it is just a new concept, that a colleague is going to come in and point out things or observe. . . . If your best friend comes up and asks, "What do you think of my dress?" you aren't going to say, "It is the ugliest thing I have even seen." You try and mince your way around it. I think that there is probably a little bit of that. I am sure it is kind of scary.

> I think it needs to be very specifically outlined what is expected in a job description of a teacher leader. Just exactly what is expected for them to do and in what areas. Every teacher needs to be aware of that so that they can call upon them for whatever reason--if they are not delivering.

> Let's say that I had a particular job description--providing input for a teacher in a particular area of the curriculum. Professional discretion would be important first of all, knowing when to say something to the teacher. You might have the job description . . . but if you approach that teacher with it, it might not do what needs to be done. . . . You have to be perceptive about the particular situation at hand. A lot of times we set rules and regulations and descriptions and expect them to be carried out letter by letter. . . . To me a teacher leader is not just someone who has mastered ideas and techniques of teacher but has mastered interaction and interplay with people.

The lack of clarity in their roles led the teacher leaders to adopt a variety of familiar tasks that were highly visible to compensate. Teacher

leaders began substituting for teachers in their classrooms; a teacher leader taught a CPR course to the teachers after school; teachers requested that career ladder teachers take over all non-classroom activities of any kind so they would never have to spend their preparation periods on anything but preparation for teaching. The principal assessed teacher leaders' initiative in developing visible tasks positively:

> I haven't seen negative things come out of it. . . . I have seen them accept leadership and run with it very well.

Early in the fall, a West teacher specialist described the role of career ladder and particularly teacher leaders that he anticipated. In May, another teacher assessed how well these ideas were played out in the school:

> I feel that career ladder is a real advantage for the new teachers for help, visits, positive feedback and suggestions for alternative ways of doing things. If it accomplishes that, then it is worth the money.
>
> There is a lot . . . that it could do if they finally figure out what they want it to do and how to go about it. . . . They are not quite sure what to do and so the teacher leaders are trying to keep busy and do things, but they are getting a lot of responsibilities that maybe they shouldn't be having.

Administrative Leadership. Leadership played an important part in the way in which authority and decision-making opportunities became available to the career ladder teachers in the two schools. The requirements of the career ladder established more opportunities for many teachers to work closely with the principal. The principal's use of the supervision system in which teacher leaders were trained and function as a manager of the cultural symbols that gave the teacher leaders legitimacy in the schools affected teacher responses.

At South, the principal was an adamant promoter of the supervision system. He had participated in the original adoption of the system and in the training of principals, faculty representatives, and teacher leaders. Just as

the teacher leaders did, the principal carefully observed and analyzed direct lecture/recitation teaching using the PET model. After a careful narrative of his observation and delineation of the categories he was watching for, the conference sessions were dominated by positive feedback supplemented by a few questions pointing out areas where a teacher might want to look more carefully into instructional decisions and behaviors. He was a story teller and a cheerleader. Comments like "I don't know how you can spend your time doing more. To me everything you were doing is fine" and "We would lose without you here. You are a powerful influence, good solid bedrock teaching" punctuated his conferences.

A believer and an orchestrator of beliefs, the principal often shared his philosophy and illustrated his point with stories.

> I believe in observing teachers and giving specific recommendations for improvement and mentioning directly those things that are going well. It takes a tremendous amount of time . . . but it brings teachers down to my office to talk about instruction.
>
> I don't believe my job is to go around looking for faults. My job is to identify things, to write things as I see them. Then I give you a chance to talk to me.

In September and October the same story appeared in almost every conference the principal held with a probationary teacher, illustrating his commitment to substantive feedback for directly observed teaching and his own experiences as a teacher.

> I received little or no supervision, and there was no relationship between what happened to me and the evaluations that were written up after the process concluded. One year, the principal said to me, "You are an enthusiastic teacher; you love your subject; you are always with the kids; you do all of these things right. But there are two things that you do wrong." And I thought, "Boy, I better write these things down." The principal said, "The first think is you don't keep your blinds adjusted so they are on the level at the end of the day." And I don't do it now. "That is true," I said. "Well, you could do that," he said. "By the end of the day remember to keep the blinds straight. "The second think he told me that I

could do to improve was, "You don't have any fish or plants in your room." No living things in my room!

Supporting the importance of the instructional approach one teacher was using, he said during one conference, "I wanted to stand up and say, 'That which you are learning right now is something you will be learning the rest of your life!'" When a teacher became a little testy over a few pointed questions he stopped. ". . .please don't perceive me as an intruder."

The career ladder teachers felt that career ladders would strengthen their working relationship with the principal. The increased contact they had with him made a contribution to that relationship. Teachers argued that "more interaction would lead to a better relationship". Explaining how the summer and fall months had affected her interaction with the principal, one teacher leader indicated:

> I've always had good relationships with him prior to this, but it seems to have strengthened our collegiality. He depends on us a great deal. We worked out the discipline policy--until we said "get in here" to him and to the assistant principal when we realized that we had gone as far as we could without bouncing off those who would have to enforce it. He gives us the impression that he has a great deal of confidence in all of us.

A teacher in the building described the relationship he had observed developing.

> This is not a situation of the dictum, Thou Shalt, here. I think if the principal is really involved with the teacher leaders in this ladder, the administration can be looked upon as older and wiser bigger brothers rather than as those assigned to cut you down. I think administrators as a rule have overused the standard that you always appear smarter and more informed if you give a negative review because it shows you have more to say.

By late spring, the teacher leaders described the year's work with the principal as openly affirming of their leadership in the school.

> He has supported us tremendously. He has taken every opportunity to openly support and to tell the teachers of the kinds of hours we have been involved in and the kind of work we have been doing. He

> said many times that we have gotten our monies worth out of this if nothing else occurs. During the summer we met with him . . . and just sat in his office and brainstormed and worked together. So we have met on a formal basis in a . . . meeting. We have also been able to say, "Okay, it is time for us to meet with you; we need time."
>
> I think [the principal] set it up so that we had a general faculty meeting for each Tuesday with one set aside for a teacher leader faculty meeting each month. We just handled whatever we felt we needed to handle. WE have had some good response from teachers. Sometimes we have had some particular things that we had to discuss for the faculty meeting to make things go--to refine the discipline policy . . . . Some days we have said, "Okay, this is your time; what is it we need to talk about?" We have had things come out.

A probationary teacher described the principal's interaction with teacher leaders as:

> [going] out of his way to explain to the faculty that the teacher leaders are responsible, that they have discretion, that he doesn't overrule some of their decisions. For that reason, the faculty has the impression that [he] is very much supportive of career ladders in general, but of the teachers leaders at [South] in particular.

The principal at West was new to the school. Appointed to the position the end of July, he continued to work at the elementary school where he had been principal and at West concurrently during the month of August. He had not been part of the development processes resulting in job descriptions, nor had he participated in the selection committee that appointed the teacher leaders. A probationary teacher at the school described this interaction late in April:

> In our faculty meeting we were talking about a peer review form for teacher leaders to evaluate their progress in the last year. Something about job descriptions was mentioned. I made a comment that if we knew what you guys were going it would help. [A teacher leader]said, "We don't even know." And I thought this is a heck of a time, after a year, to still be floundering.

The relationship of authority and work affirmation that developed between the principal and the teacher leaders at South never materialized at West. Roles and contributions never solidified.

The principal at West was also a story teller. To illustrate an injunction to be very careful not to leave junior high school students unattended in their rooms he shared:

> The first year I was teaching I was right across from the media center. We were in the middle of a geography assignment, doing a project, and everybody was working. Kind of like your class. Everyone was working on maps and working within small groups. A kid came up to me and asked for a book. I said, "Let me go over and get it, because I have got to get another book for another student. I was gone two minutes of that room, walked right to where the book was, grabbed the book, checked it out. Walked back in my room to find a girl in tears. She had been working with the map and it fell and hit her forehead. Ultimately it broke her foot. I had to fill out the accident report including who was a witness. Was the teacher a witness? No. The principal just about went crazy on me.

The principal indicated late in November that he was relying on the teacher leaders to take care of the clinical supervision and professional development needs of the probationary teachers while he concentrated on other personnel problems in the faculty. He was doing some clinical observations but was having difficulty finding time for conferences with teachers. As the year progressed, he got around to almost all the probationary teachers. By mid-October, the some probationary teachers expressed concern:

> I think he believes he does not have to worry about the new teachers because the teachers leaders are there for them to rely on for help.

> At first I though I would be able to get to the principal when I needed to on an access basis. I feel like I need more contact and exchange of ideas. He has visited the class once, though he did not give much feedback, and I would have appreciated more. The principal said he felt good about what I was doing, though he was not specific. He says he wants to be like a coach offering critical evaluation, positive strokes, suggestions for change. I would like him to be a little more visible.

In March, two other probationary teachers expressed disappointment:

> He has observed me a couple of times, but we have never had formal conferences. I have gotten feedback that he thinks I am a good teacher in informal ways, which is good I think and necessary to get a little feeling I am not going to be canned at the end of the year. . . . But I never considered that he would be someone who

would influence my teaching. And I don't think he does, and it is no problem.

I have never seen him in the classroom.

The principal and assistant principal continued to observe and assist teachers in the school during the year, and many teachers could give examples of instances in which they worked together, but the principal never played the visible role in direct classroom observation that South's principal played. Few teachers were critical of this different role.

Hampered by the principal's late arrival at the school, articulation of career ladder roles did not evolve and solidify. In October, the teacher leaders expressed their reactions:

I feel that the staff development role and mentoring of probationary teachers that we should be doing is not very well articulated and we are unclear in our direction and what is expected of us.

I hope that we will work together more. Up until now we have not met formally--I hope to do that--as a team with the principal to work toward goals.

The issues are beginning to pressure us. We really need to get going. We need to know what we should do. [The principal] should tell us what we should do, and we should all be doing the same thing. . . . I think we should have unity as a teacher leader team and a plan of action. Most of all, we have to have lots of trust in the faculty. We do not have anything to do with evaluation, and we want that made clear to teachers. Then and only then did the invitations to observe begin to come to us.

The principal described the teacher leaders' primary role as:

in clinical supervision. They want to meet more often, but . . . I've dropped the ball. [The teacher leaders] want to do something visible. There is a question of abuse of preparation periods in our school. Their number one assignment is to mother hen probationary teachers. I then see my role as working on problems in tenure faculty.

In January, a teacher leader, lamenting the late start and subsequent criticism of career ladders at West, indicated they were "looking forward to really working together in a career ladder with the principal next year." By

February, the principal articulated his philosophy of the career ladder as "having good people and letting them go through the paces. . . . I know the results, and I know what is happening, and the results are positive." In March the principal assessed the effect of career ladder on principal's work load:

> I pointed out to [the superintendent] that a lot of things that principals are required to do now are career ladder. That is taking time from something else.
>
> It is a matter of having the time, both theirs and mine, to sit down and do things we need to do. I don't know what their perception of it would be, but I would say we need to get together more often, and we just haven't. It is a matter of prioritizing, and whatever is the hottest issue gets the time. . . . A lot of teachers are feeling resentment because they see that they are getting extra time and extra money, and we aren't seeing benefits. . . .
>
> Nobody seems to know what is expected of them.
>
> Well, we are having trouble with the job descriptions.

District leadership, an issue raised by the faculty and administrators at West that teachers and administrators at South tended to discount, affected the atmosphere of the discussions in late spring. A change in the superintendency created some changes in expectations at the school. Teachers at West referred to the new superintendent as "very caring" and "supportive of individuals". Expressing what this meant to her as the rebellious representative of West on the district career ladder task force, a teacher explained:

> People are suddenly saying things that I have been saying for months. I looked at [our principal], and he looked at me. Does this sound familiar? My impression was that the feeling was that it was a lot safer. What made me mad was I think it would have been safe all along.

<u>Violation of Norms.</u> Features of the career ladder were so completely foreign to conventional practice and relationships that the violation of

school norms caused considerable tension as career ladder teachers exercised their authority.

While teachers were quick to praise the teacher leaders' work, charges of rate busting, accusations of "being in bed with the administration", and tensions developing between the union and the administration as negotiations heated up began to have an impact on South. One teacher leader who was "doing a lot", preparing materials for the faculty, observing teachers, working with the other two teacher leaders said that "teachers in the faculty seemed a little miffed with me for turning out so much. 'What are you trying to prove?'" Teacher leaders found it helpful to alter the style of their observations, abandoning the principals form, because there was some sense that the process felt "too much like the principal coming in. They thought that all of this would get back to [the principal]." He used the word "stooley". Collegiality, its multiple meanings for teachers, and its ramifications for teacher sharing and cooperation was also an issue.

By April the issue of selection for the following year's career ladder teachers had reignited some emotions that had died down the previous fall. A probationary teacher described the new tensions:

> At first I didn't really notice. I thought it was more on the positive side. Just lately I have caught a couple of comments. . . . I don't know if they said them more in jest or if they really felt that way. Just little things like--well--the principal chose this person because this person is in the office answering telephones. That had never really entered into my mind. I thought, "What if that is true?"

Norms of egalitarianism, firmly established among teachers, were also manifested. Teacher leaders, who had recently been praised for exercising real authority and their principal praised for encouraging them to do so,

faced the concerns of some faculty members that everyone should get their turn at the position.

> There is still some feeling in the school that perhaps . . . everybody ought to have a chance to be on career ladders, or that some people who are on a career ladder shouldn't be there and others should be. If we are going to call it a career ladder then there certainly have to be some steps. If we say everybody is on the career ladder, then it is not a career ladder. But I would like to see people really who are qualified given the opportunity in some capacity to serve. . . .
>
> I would like to see more teachers involved in the ladder. We have more than any in the state, but there should be room for more than 50% of the teachers. More than 50% of our teachers are excellent.

During their final planning meeting in the spring, issues surfaced that teacher leaders had not articulated at South before. One teacher worried about criticism that she had not done her job and was reassured by her colleagues.

> If someone just took a look at the number of visits that I have made and they looked only at that then they might have the tendency to say, well, "Is this person using that time wisely?"
>
> If they then made the comparison between you and the administrator and say, "Well here is a teacher with one sixth of the time of an administrator, my guess is that right now you have made probably as many visits as some administrators have to teachers that they need to visit. I really don't think that that is something that you need to worry about.
>
> Gee, if you happen to hear that kind of comment, I would hope that you would remind them of all the additional things [I did].

At West, egalitarian norms, suspicion about other teachers motives, worries about effects on sharing and cooperation, and accusations that the career ladder teachers had been chosen because of connections with the principal were also common, but they emerged long before they were openly expressed at South.

The sense that almost all teachers are good teachers dominated

conversations at West from the beginning of the study. In his journal, one teacher specialist articulated a commonly expressed opinion:

> I have a suggestion--all non-probationary teachers be evaluated comprehensively every year through student, parent, peer, and administration evaluation--each of these four sources carrying equal weight--and all teachers who meet a pre-determined level of performance be given a rating of either professional or teacher leader. Al who are evaluated at the teacher leader level be given teacher leader responsibility and teacher leader pay--available resources to be divided equally among all. . . . [A]ll [emphasis in the original] teachers who have taught three or more years and are reasonably effective in the classroom should evaluate out at the teacher leader level, and those few who don't may be the ones who would be doing all students a service by finding another line of work.

One teacher leader, referring to a long-time friend who was not a teacher leader but whom she felt was an excellent teacher, said "It would be good for him professionally, because he was a great teacher, and he's slipping as he becomes more and more discouraged". Another teacher leader complained early in the year that some faculty members "throw it up in your face". Other comments--"We've got some excellent teachers. They should all be rewarded", "It could be a rotating basis where people who are qualified would come up in a rotation, so that they would actually be the next one offered the job, and then the persons who were in [the positions] would go to the back of the line", or "The money would be better used raising the salary of all teachers evenly to make teaching more attractive and to eliminate resentment and conflict" were not uncommon at West in the fall and early winter.

> One aspect of teaching that I [a teacher specialist] enjoyed immensely after working in the private sector for some eight years was that all teaches were colleagues and there was a feeling of camaraderie among all teachers. Since we were all equal in pay and in position there was no advantage to be gained over another through brown nosing the people in authority or by demeaning or putting down someone else. There was an absence of jealousy, resentment, etc. between teachers. . . . Now all teachers must compete with each other for the favor of administrators. No matter how you cut it under the present system the administrator will be the moving

force behind the selection process and as long as that is the case brown nosing will be the general rule.

The importance of taking ones turn was consistent, applying to experienced teachers' control of the career ladder. When a probationary representative on the district task force committee suggested that non-tenured teachers should do some classroom observing and critiques she said, "You would have thought I had blasphemed. Obviously, your non-tenured," a couple of teachers said. "We have that to offer."

In late January, an experienced veteran on the faculty attempted to explain the importance of egalitarianism to some members of the faculty.

> In Japan it is considered bad form, taboo, to be promoted as an individual above ones group. The group is promoted. It is not good to leave the group behind, grounds for great criticism. Some believe that the superintendent (and the last principal) used Provo as a stepping stone. Some faculty members here feel one individual should never excel above the person's group.

The bad form embodied in competing with ones colleagues for recognition was demonstrated by criticisms of the lack of "security" in the way the selection process was organized. One teacher explained the conflict during the winter:

> A lot of tenured teachers who wanted to have the position didn't quite know how they would be accepted or . . judged and who was going to be judging them, and that bothered them. . . . They felt like that needed to be a little bit more secure before they went in and tried out for the jobs.

Motives of career ladder teachers were also questioned, as was their relationship with administrators. There was a lack of "trust". In January a teacher explained:

> Most of the problem here is revolving around one teacher leader. [He] puts in too much time on the job, coming at 6:30 and 7:00 in the morning to work. People resent that. [He] also spends far too much time in the principal's office--brown nosing. People say, "If everyone did what [he] does, there'd be no room in the office."

Collegiality. Closely related to the disruption of firmly established normative relationships, accusations that career ladder might cause teachers to horde good ideas surfaced periodically in both schools but far more vigorously at West.

At South, the school year began in a spirit of convivial cooperation. In his journal, one teacher leader recorded:

> With the year in full swing and the faculty off to a running start, this looks to be the best year I've ever seen at South. We are better prepared and able to handle the process of educating students. I am looking forward to the sharing that seems to be more likely.

Another teacher leader attributed much of the early high spirits to the 9 1/2 days of work before the students arrived at school and the opportunity teachers had to have "lots of good discussion and arguing". A teacher who failed to receive a teacher specialist appointment she had competed for the previous spring credited the hard work of the fall with dissipating much of the tension. "Feelings were running very high after the selection process last spring, and people were very worried."

Teachers at South differentiated between competition, refusal to cooperate, and manipulation.

> There is a difference . . . between competing, the idea of competing, and being the best you can be. A lot of times competition helps to bring out the best in people. If someone is going to change their behavior for the better to impress someone for a job application, at least they are changing for the better, whatever the motive. There are people who are changing and becoming better just because people are watching. There are those that are changing and becoming better just because that is part of what they do with their lives.

Though the selection process was again in full swing (All teacher jobs during the first year were for only one year.), teachers still argued that cooperation remained the dominant pattern at South. A teacher leader:

> I have seen a faculty working together in a way I have not seen before . . . , more cooperation, less bitching. There really has been less bitching going on in the faculty room. Hardly ever have I heard any one of [the teachers] complain as we have had in the past. And I have been a part of it in the past. There are a few who have some feelings of antagonism, but even they have not been as blatantly offensive as sometimes in the past.

Other teachers shared these perceptions.

> This year is different than any other year I have been here. This year is beginning to approach what I thought the profession was going to be like when I first began to teach.
>
> I think one of the advantages . . . is that there is more sharing of ideas and experiences within the staff than there was before.
>
> I don't see a lot of people keeping closed mouthed about what they do, because they feel threatened that maybe someone will be taking over their position. . . . I don't get that feeling. I get a feeling of sharing of ideas and sharing information.
>
> We decided that South has enough teaching expertise and exciting teaching techniques that everyone ought to have a chance to see someone else teach. There is a list of teachers who have volunteered to have someone come in and watch them teach. The there is a list of people who would like to observe. I have a list of 28 people that are going to participate [There are 39 teachers on the faculty].

At West, the spirit of cooperation and sharing tended to be isolated. A teacher leader described "working together with three teacher leaders" as the best part of the career ladder experience. By late spring, teachers were willing to conceded that the career ladder teachers had been generous and open with teaching ideas.

> I don't see the teacher leaders not sharing. . . . Nor do I see teachers who are hording ideas. . . . Nor do I see teacher leader judging.
>
> I think the teacher leaders have been real willing to share all of their ideas. They have been willing to help out. But I think some of the other teachers that didn't make teacher may be hording. They felt "Why should I give my ideas out. I am not getting paid anything extra." So on the whole, everybody is not helping and sharing, but I think the teachers leaders have been.

Among the faculty as a whole, however, a feeling persisted that some teachers had become more entrenched. A probationary teacher explained:

> This faculty needs to work together as a faculty for the sole purpose of the individual [client], who in this case is the student. . . . Here I feel like there is a war between the science department and the math department. And you shall not cross this boundary. That to me is defeating; it seems to be defeating what teacher leadership should be all about.

Others were more sanguine in their estimates of the state of sharing at West. "I don't think they are saying, 'I am going to keep all of my little techniques to myself, because if I share them with you then maybe you will have the position I will want.'" "Career ladders have given me someone to ask questions of . . . , the feeling that it is okay to ask questions and not come out looking like you don't know what you're doing." "The in-services have been really worthwhile."

Teachers at West expressed a keen sense of personal competition. Some teacher comments:

> I have seen a lot of competition. I get the idea that people who are not teacher leaders would really like to be able to have a chance at that money or that status or whatever it is [Teacher, November].

> Cooperation and competition are a matter of people's attitudes; you can't govern it. You can not legislate it; you can't set rules about it. The career ladder program can be outlined in one school and work beautifully because everyone is willing to cooperate and work. In the exact same program in another school it will fail miserably because no one is willing to cooperate, and it is just going to go down the tube. . . . If there is a spirit of competition and selfishness there, no matter how good the program is, there are going to be problems [Teacher, April].

> As long as people just role play--I will not do more than I am told to do, and I will not do this because I haven't been told to do this. Then it is competition [Teacher April].

> This particular faculty is very competitive. The thing I noticed a lot in the faculty meetings when the job descriptions came up was . . . that nobody really wanted to do more than they were told to

do, or more than they really had to do. That is not professionalism [Teacher, May].

A family of words used to describe emotions among some faculty members at West remained stable from the fall, through the winter, and into the spring and the second round of selections--divisiveness, resentment, and jealousy.

> We need to develop a congenial work group, trust, and avoid animosity and jealousy. We need to avoid traditional autocratic behavior. I believe we should rotate the teacher leaders experience and give everyone who is competent a perspective and basis of understanding of school problems along with the expectations for school efforts [teacher leader, October].

> I am concerned about the social divisiveness that could come from career ladders. There is a feeling of separation, heavy teasing from some other faculty members that is good natured but nevertheless lets you know that, though you're not quite out of it, you're not quite always in the "in" group anymore. There is a sense that you are not quite one of the troops anymore [teacher leader, November]

> In the school there is a feeling that three people are now supervisory personnel and it causes real changes--some problems. There is jealousy and resentment. Some are suspicious that teacher leaders might feel a little funny themselves or out of the mainstream because of the new relationships [teacher specialist, October].

> There is a delicate balance between someone exerting their own superiority and someone saying, "I think if you try this it might. . . ." The humanness of career ladders scares me. Maybe its because i'm so human, but it might bother others. Aren't we all in this together? I also perceive a lot of brown nosing [teacher specialist, October]

> In this staff, there is some enormous resentment. I can't figure out why it is working in some schools and not in others, though I have to tell you that I personally think that there is something very wrong about building a system in which teachers much compete with each other [teacher, January].

> Career ladders has not been without a great deal of pain and in some cases envy on other teachers' part [teacher leader, April]

> Then I see some people checking on other people during their preparation period. I wasn't aware of that until somebody drew it to my attention. There is an element of competition or suspicion. . . . It is the same people . . . all of the time. So I haven't considered it too seriously, because I consider the source.

> I thought, hey this has been going on for eons [teacher leader, April].

Career Ladder Teacher Power. As part of the performance of their duties, their access to and control over information, and their new participation in decision-making at the school level, many career ladders teachers were perceived as accruing power. Power-sharing and leadership had both positive and negative implications for teachers. Along with involvement in leadership circles, the teacher leaders discovered that meetings had a life of their own.

At South, the increased level of involvement and control was greeted with enthusiasm. A teacher leader explained the importance of substantive involvement in the development and revision of the career ladder plan throughout the year.

> With teacher leaders participating in that district leadership, I think it has brought a lot more control back to the school. [Additionally], our people feel like they can say something here, and it is going to get back to the district task force or committee, particularly with regard to career ladders, and make a difference.

In the fall, another teacher leader had predicted the importance of their leadership role.

> We will accomplish more because more people will be working to solve school problems and share in the leadership process. This may not be apparent to those who are farther away from the ladder roles. We participate!

The sense of increased participation in substantive decision-making remained stable throughout the year at South. Teachers described the district task force as "continuing to meet and revise and do whatever is necessary to improve the career ladder for next year". They attributed their sense of success to the representation of every faculty in the district by a teacher on the task force, bringing information back to faculties, and providing every teacher in the district an opportunity for input.

On the school level, South's teachers described changes in the decision-making pattern of the school.

> The teachers seem to run the school, and it makes us feel responsible to solve problems. We have the feeling that the administration has such confidence in us that we want to do a good job. I believe that the principal set this up [Teacher, November].
>
> It is interesting--there is more contention in the faculty meetings now because the administration is willing to listen and talk means something [Teacher, December].
>
> I know faculty meetings go a lot longer because there is a lot more interaction than there was last year. There is more of an exchange of ideas. . . . We pick up and we handle some problems. Normally it was taken on by the principal; now we handle it. So we have our input, and we have to own it too [Teacher, April].

This sense of influence and power-sharing was lacking at West. Rather than feeling like part of a leadership team, teacher leaders described a fairly continuous onslaught of ribbing--good-natured but tiresome. The only data entries that specifically address this important dynamic at South that were collected at West refer to an "adversarial feeling about relationships with authority". The assistance provided by teacher leaders to new teachers was described by one as:

> [They act like] they need to give us help because we are new, and we don't know what we are doing and they do. I have resented that--the fact that they think they know more . . . when we are the ones that are fresh out of college; we know what we are doing or we wouldn't be here.

Old Structure/New Structure Stress Zones. Finally, the changes in authority relationships brought by career ladders to the two schools caused some strain when they conflicted with old and firmly established personnel structures.

A perhaps unanticipated effect of teacher career ladders in the two schools was the disruption of the assistant principal position. Because the plan provided for substantial pay, approaching full time work at the regular

contract rate for many teachers, some teacher leaders made more money than many assistant principals and some elementary school principals. Additionally, the authority and leadership opportunities that came with the new leadership team made some assistant principals feel uncertain about their own career choices. At South, the assistant principal indicated that:

> I had some concerns that some of the assistant principal job would be picked up by the teacher leaders, but that isn't happening. I was afraid that I would not be as useful or important in the school. I still work closely with the principal. There is the pay issue, too. We can't avoid the way it makes me feel when I make less and work longer hours than teacher leaders. That has to be addressed. I feel like a lot of what I do that goes with the turf, teachers now get extra pay for. . . . I'm not sure where I stand in the scheme of things.

The second structural conflict which remained largely unresolved in the first year was the relationship of career ladders to the traditional departmental structure in secondary schools. Both schools in the study retained the basic departmental structure and called the department heads teacher specialists, even though both were involved in discussions about dropping their academic department divisions at a later date. At South, the departments were retained, but the traditional mechanisms for dealing with teachers through departments was displaced by the career ladder. One teacher expressed her concern:

> Initially I had thought the career ladder would do away with the department chair position. I was hoping things would be done within our own department, and it isn't happening. That has bothered me, and there seems to be no way to check on things. No check up. There should be something.

The new structure was explained by a teacher leader:

> Eventually department heads will not be department heads. We will have what you call cluster leaders. There will be one particular teacher specialist that is in charge of several teachers from various subject areas other than his or her own.

However, the career ladder plan had not resolved the questions about the

the teacher specialist/department head role after the first year.

> Your are going to have some money available to you so that you could spend the time to set up a program, and thin it is gone the next year! There is no need to follow-up with it. There is little versatility, flexibility in the positions.

At West, old patterns and the new authority of teacher leaders caused some conflict. The principal described his reliance on the teacher leaders when teacher specialists had been officially designated as department heads.

> I keep forgetting that [a specialist] is the head of the science department and that [a specialists] is head of English. Because I interact so much with the teacher leaders, I tend to go back to them for things that I ought to be going to the specialists for. I think teachers are doing that somewhat too. I don't think they are trying to raise their status above anyone else. They want to be team players; they want to part of the group. . . . I don't think it is happening deliberately.

The most universal question, unresolved and hotly debated at the end of the first year of the career ladder at South was, "What is teaching?". The new structure defined many academic, curriculum, school-wide, instructional, and pupil control issues as part of teaching work. In its most basic and narrowly defined structure described succinctly by a young teacher who planned to stop teaching an independent study course for resource students, teaching is face to face lecture/recitation instruction of a classroom full of students.

> I can teach better . . . [in] classroom teaching--you know, the structured, up in front of the class teaching. I can make sure that everyone is really catching on.

Career ladders have not yet created a new and agreed upon definition of what is teaching, though they have inflamed the debate.

Career Incentive

The third major theme arising from the two case studies in the first year of job enlargement career ladder implementation was the relative progress toward providing some form of career incentive for teachers through the career ladder reform. The developing dynamics of career incentives in the two cases was divided into five major issues: the relationship of the career ladder and its evaluation process to the district's teacher evaluation and accountability system; expectations for potential outcomes from career ladders held by the educators in the two schools; impatience with the challenge of job redesign; attitudes about teacher merit pay; and career ladder teachers' struggle with time and the definition of teaching.

Career Ladders and Teacher Evaluation. If promotions, extra work assignments, and performance bonuses are awarded to teachers, some form of evaluation that identifies those who will be promoted, assigned, or awarded the spoils of the incentive system. The career ladder in the district used the same structure of classroom observations for its teacher evaluation, qualification for candidacy for career ladder positions, and career ladder teacher supervision and mentor systems. As the year progressed, it became apparent that the congruence between principal and teacher leader application of the observation system, the selection procedure for career ladder teachers that relied in part on the evaluation system, the evaluation of career ladder teachers' performance, and the stability of the career opportunities offered by the career ladder influenced is perceived strength as an incentive to teachers.

At South, the principal observed teachers regularly and enthusiastically. For most of them it was a "real lift, making [them feel

like a true pro [sic]". For others, it was an addition to the world of teaching evoked less positive images. "I don't like being spied on," said one veteran teacher. The ambience created by his supervision style, particularly with younger teachers, inspired them.

> Basically, the number one thing he has given me would just be professionalism. He has shown me through his actions [not to] be afraid to try something new, explore all the possibilities. He is always up on the current research. He passes that on to us.

In most cases he returned with feedback on observations within a day of his visit to classrooms. He was described by one teacher as "a lot of information I can draw from . . . , like a good library". Teachers were praised liberally. "I see the cream in your classroom. I wish that you could be advertised, copied." Using descriptive and paraphrasing techniques, his clinical supervision conferences were highly structured.

> Did you teach to an objective? Did you monitor the kids properly? Did you teach at their level, so that they could understand it? Did the kids appear like they were motivated, reinforced, transferred, had opportunities to practice?

As a system for identifying competence in direct frontal teaching, the clinical supervision program as applied at South seemed to function well.

Like the principal, the teacher leaders observed probationary teachers (and other teachers when their invited). Even more than with the principal, the issue of familiar, recognizable teaching patterns became apparent in the conference records.

> I was going to find out how often you give whole group instruction. You don't ever do that unless these is a problem that is common to everyone? [October]

> Do you spend more time in your teaching the whole group than you did today? . . . As you went over the word with them today--before they got to their freewheeling--that was probably about ten minutes [March]

> Of course, I was not able to observe many things that perhaps I would have observed had you been doing more instructing today [December].
>
> I really didn't have a lot to write on the sheet as far as the kinds of things I observed, but that was because you were not, at that class period, teaching a new concept or reteaching. Had you been doing either one of those two things I could have perhaps commented on most of the [principles] at the top of the paper. So I would like to come in sometime when you know you are going to be teaching a concept [March].
>
> You know . . . that everyday you won't have all of the elements of a lesson design. But there are some things that each day that ought to be there. How did you feel today about your lesson as far as lesson design was concerned? [Teacher]: Well, generally most of the lessons that I teach are individual lessons [December].
>
> Would some general instruction at the beginning of each class period help to motivate those who really are not self starters? I think to focus everybody's attention on you, so that you kind of set the stage, [will help] [March].
>
> I was pleased that you were doing some direct teaching today with the group, so that I could observe that [December].

While the number of examples from the data may seem excessive, they are illustrative of pressures cased by evaluation for rewards rather than to establish minimal competency. If the conceptual frame is limited and the discriminatory power questionable, then judgments distributing rewards on the basis on good, better, and best will require considerably more data. The selection system for career ladders did.

The impact of selection and accountability system for career ladder teachers on the school was strong. Teachers talked about the very hurt and hard feelings that resulted from the first selection procedure. While a selection committee made up of the principal and two non-applicants chose the teacher leaders by majority vote, the dynamics of the committee and teacher perceptions about who really chose the leaders played an important role. At South, the knowledge that district level teacher leaders had been actively

recruited and that applications for school level specialist positions were recruited by the principal were factors that influenced these perceptions. Two of the three teacher leaders were established veterans at the school, one the current president of the teachers association. These factors added to the already firmly established suspicion on the part of some teachers that the principal really selected the teacher leaders. In a conversation in April the teacher leaders explored the preceding year's events:

> I didn't even want this district [position]. . . . I was told you will apply. That gripes me that they already know who they want for the positions before anybody's advice [is sought].
>
> Yours is not the only position that happened in. I know of one other one.

Other teachers also talked about the selection problem. Some felt that "favoritism was shown". Teachers who held this belief did not insist that the principal had ignored the established requirements of the selection committee, only that he had--either through his powers of persuasion or "assertive" leadership convinced the other members of the committee that his candidates were the best choice or because they did not feel free to pass over his apparent favorites--controlled the selection.

An unsuccessful teacher specialist candidate recorded the following suggestions in her journal in late September, illustrating the impossibility of separating selection, accountability, and teacher evaluation under the career ladder:

> I feel that the career ladders program is wonderful, but I do have a few suggestions:
>
> 1) I do <u>not</u> feel that membership or nonmembership in [district affiliate of NEA] or any other teachers' association should affect a teacher's chances to participate in the career ladders program.
> 2) I believe that those who select teacher leaders and teacher specialists should account to everyone who applied and explain <u>why</u> they chose those they did. That way those who weren't

selected could better understand, and feelings of inferiority might be lessened.

3) I think that as soon as the selections are made, the should be announced and/or posted, so that they don't appear to be a big secret.

4) I would like to know what the teacher specialists (especially the ones who got the positions that I applied for) are doing. I'm sure they are doing the job, but I would like to see it in writing. That way I could feel really happy and supportive toward their positions. I think it's very easy for someone who applied for and didn't get one of the positions to say, "Gosh, I would have done a better job," or "I would have done more in that position". For this reason, I think each specialist should publish something showing what he/she has done, is doing, and will do in that position.

The visibility of career ladder teachers work became a major issue. In October, the principal indicated that to address the need for accountability, the teacher leaders began to report once a month on their activities to the faculty. Other teachers also asked for a written account of the teacher leaders work at South, just so teachers "can see if [what they did] really helped in their particular program". Another teacher explained this desire for a written account of teacher leader activities. "People wonder what was done." In November, a probationary teacher at South explained teachers' lingering suspicions about the ultimate justice of a selection decision:

> [Career ladders is not an incentive.] Not as a never teacher--not for me. I see people "above" me in the ladder and see some of them as dead wood and I think, "What the hell is he doing there? He is paid very well for doing no extra work that I can see." There is some problem with picking the best people. I wonder, "How did he get there?" . . . A never teacher has no real chance to move up the ladder fast, because older teachers have formed relationships that dominate the selection process. It's kind of back slapping.

One of South's teacher leaders provided a list of criteria on which he felt the teacher leaders should be evaluated. Performance in the classroom, improvement as a teacher, willingness and ability to share skills and materials, meeting the needs of the probationary teachers, peer evaluation,

organizing and scheduling, public relations, and promotion of the PET program and instructional improvement.

Careers last more than a year. However, the issue of broad access v stability of career opportunity continued to be debated at South. The solution (compromise), reached by the district level career ladder task force was that positions would be for two years with positions in a school staggered so that they did not come open at the same time. Teachers could reapply for their positions. Teachers expressed their worries:

> I am concerned how they'll pick the leaders again and what will happen if the same person applies and doesn't get the position. Maybe they could say that people are not eligible again after they have served one term. Maybe a term could be longer.

After a few months as a teacher leader, the problems in short-term appointments were described by a South teacher leader:

> I feel negative about the one year positions, and we're the ones that insisted on it with the superintendent. If we hold to that . . . all the training and work the teacher leaders have been through would be lost if we turn it over so quickly. . . . I could not sever all my extra work ties this year, because I'm not sure whether I'll be a teacher leader next year or not. We need more stability in the position. The money for career ladders should be increased to give everyone who is qualified a teacher leader position and made it stable.

Pressure to continue to require long years of experience in the district and, often, in the school continued. Even after a year they judged as successful, one teacher leader argued against the likelihood that many young teachers could do the kind of job one of their teacher leader's had done (with five years of experience). "I think [this person] was unique." However, a probationary teacher argued against turn taking:

> This time we have the cream of the crop. I question what will happen if they get stale or if people feel compelled to rotate the position, so that others not so well qualified fill the positions.

At West, the relationship of the career ladder to overall teacher evaluation for selection and accountability was tumultuous. Feelings ran high well into the winter over the selection procedure from the previous spring (in which the current principal had not participated); the observation/supervision system was applied in different ways by the principal and teacher leaders; and teachers demanded accountability from the teacher leaders because of a variety of accusations about their work or lack of work.

Describing his role in classroom observations as a "mirror" with some comments, the principal also applied PET in his observations. As for his colleagues at South, this posed problems when teaching was individualized, outcome based, or task or group structured. The faculty members who were observed generally praised the usefulness of his visits:

> I would like the principal to . . . personally involve me more in the teaching profession and made me more knowledgeable. I think that creates more say in what's going on for the teachers and involves me in asking for more feedback and more often. My previous experience with faculty meetings was that they were announcements. We talk about teaching and the principal asks for feedback from the faculty during faculty meetings.

Describing his interactions with the principal through November, one probationary teacher indicated that he had been more helpful than the teacher leader, was adept at giving help and support.

The principal recognized the additional pressure that career ladder placed on the performance evaluation system. While he was not as frequent a classroom visitor as the principal of South, he was committed to continuing the emphasis on the observation system, which he credited with helping him give higher quality curriculum and instruction feedback to teachers.

While some teachers continued to view teacher leader observation as "being spied on" and evaluation ("What guarantee do we have that the teacher

leader is not going to go running into the principal and say, 'This is a lost cause?'") others lamented the difficulties at West in integrating a more open teaching atmosphere.

> I wish there were a way to get everybody less inhibited about being observed and having somebody come in. I wish there were this atmosphere of freedom to mingle and to sander into somebody's room and not have that person question, "Why are they here"? I think this may be a distrustful attitude.

In October, probationary teachers were expressing serious expectations for their teacher leaders:

> From my teacher leader I expect observations, suggestions on alternative approaches, and behaviors and positive feedback on things I am doing well. I want to talk about my teaching and expect a positive impact on my teaching from career ladders. . . . It has already had an influence on discussions in faculty meetings about the school. The supervision from other departments gives you new perspectives and forces interaction between teacher groups and individuals.

But by May, that hope had faded:

> What I found happened was that very few classroom visits were made. There was a fear on the part of the teacher leaders that they would offend, that they would be too obvious . . . and make people nervous. . . . Now we have got umpteen other things added in there because there was a feeling school-wide that teacher leaders didn't do anything. So now we have got to give them something to do.

This issue of accountability arose directly out of the observation/evaluation system and the its failure to address the work of the teacher leaders.

The structure of the system for the selection of teacher leaders was the same at West as at South--majority vote of a committee made up of two teachers and the principal. Of the three members of West's selection committee, two were no longer at the school, the teacher having left to pursue graduate students and the principal having resigned. The remaining member of the committee felt strongly, and talked openly with faculty members about it, that the selection process had been wired. Principal dominance was, as at South,

an issue. The committee member argued that by failing to ask identical questions of all candidates, some were made to appear better to the committee and the selection process was manipulated. Several teachers argued that career ladder promotions encouraged the continuation a process they had observed of seeking favor with the administration; "brown nosing" was a phrase repeated again and again at West, supplemented by "currying favor".

The struggle over other criteria to enrich the evaluation data from classroom observations was intense at West. Teachers argued heatedly over the relative merits of student, peer, and parent evaluations, classroom observation, and other data. A teacher specialist described the process of evolving opinions:

> I felt very strongly last year that it should be exclusively classroom performance. But I can see now that that is probably not enough--it should include how your peers feel about you and how you get along with your fellow teachers [May].

He also became a strong advocate of student evaluations. Another teacher described some of the faculty as "terrified by the thought that their students will be evaluating them. This faculty is upset by that."

Upset by the confusion that resulted in such widespread criticism of the teacher leaders' activities, the faculty at West became preoccupied with career ladder teacher accountability. The use of the preparation time was a major issue. The rumor spread, supported by the custodian, that a teacher leader had been working in the school shop on a personal carpentry project during the additional preparation program in the fall. By late October, it was commonly accepted as truth. Nevertheless, the teacher leaders did not substantially alter their supervisory behavior over the course of the year, continuing to be reticent to observe probationary teachers regularly. Experiences like those described at South, where experienced teachers began to

contact teacher leaders, were never reported at West. Again and again, in interviews and field notes of casual conversations the questions were repeated: What are they doing with their preparation period? What are they doing?

Stories from other schools that the teacher leaders were being "used to the max" only fueled the faculty's frustration. By spring they were asking for written accounts of career ladder teachers' activities in a tone more shrill than that at South. They also suggested that one faculty meeting a month, like that at South, should be devoted to teacher career ladder reports and a monthly newsletter would be helpful. While others were talking about accountability on the basis of job descriptions, one teacher sounded a cautionary note:

> I did not feel badly about the job descriptions. I feel like the teacher specialists, of which I was one, had the leeway to go with whatever their program was and make a good thing of it. It was up to each individual to go for them and use a little creativity, a little energy, and do what they could. . . . Some of the teacher specialists acted like they needed someone to tell them what to do.

His program was widely praised by the faculty.

Other teachers also wondered why more incentive, initiative, and creativity had not been used. "It's interesting," remarked one teacher in May, "now the cry is, 'Oh, it is such a big job and we have had to take so much time.' I don't see a lot of leadership."

The confusion and frustration about the role, leading to difficulty in establishing accountability for performance frustrated the teacher leaders. By the time accusations had flown for eight months, nerves were raw.

> . . . The teacher leaders have not really been given any feedback from administration or [anywhere] other than what we have been able to pick up in innuendos, body language, or whatever. As far as actually having some kind of evaluation and saying, "These are the things that we agreed upon in the job description. These are things

> that you are accomplishing. These are things that you need to improve in." I see none of that. That makes it kind of frustrating because you don't know if you are going on the right track or if you are not.

Unlike the teachers at South, the faculty at West barely considered the implications of the stability of promotion. In April, a conversation recorded in a journal gave some indication that teachers had thought about career implications.

> A teacher leader told me today that he felt he was a much better teacher than ever before; because of the extra income he was able to quit his second job and put more effort into teaching.

A teacher leader at West, reflecting on his future career choices, remarked, "A career ladder's not a ladder if you fall off it automatically every year". The same issues troubled a probationary teacher.

> Is it really a ladder if in order for somebody else to hop on the bottom rov, somebody has to fall of the top rov? If it could be on-going, that is, not just limited to [such] a small percentage, I think it could be more appealing to keep people in education.

Expectations. The teachers at South centered many of their hopes on the potential of career ladders a legitimate reform in teaching. "People say they want reform, for their children to be taught the best way they can be. This can happen with career ladders. . . . Time devoted to career ladder, instructional improvement, and schools should directly affect the classroom." "My expectations," argued one young teacher, "have changed. Last year I wanted to stay in my classroom and be a better teacher by myself. If I'm here next year I'll want to be on the ladder. I've seen some good things happen."

A major factor in teachers' willingness to plan for career ladders is their expectation that the reform itself will be stable. Teachers did not express much faith in the willingness of policy-makers to give the reform time

to honestly assess its potential as a legitimate change in the work of teaching.

> The superintendent was in our faculty meeting the other day. He feels optimistic about money being funded for next year. But it doesn't seem like [the principal] has that same feeling. It would be a shame for all this hard work to go down the drain.

> Teachers are skeptical about its longevity and are concerned about whether it will last given the negative publicity from other districts [and] states.

> Young teachers making career plans were frank about their concerns. If the reform were to die in the next few years they have much to lose.

> I can't hang my hat on the career ladders yet, because I believe that support for it is tenuous. The legislators' response is so questionable. If our model is allowed to fly, it will be very helpful to me. I intend to jump on career ladders if it goes.

Fear of premature evaluation was expressed by several young teachers at South. "I get nervous. . . being afraid that what I see as a potentially extremely positive thing may get flushed down the toilet." "I hate to see the ladder bombarded by negatives from the legislature without giving it a good try. I won't say ours is the best way, but it is one of the better plans."

One young teacher summed up:

> I wish you could study the career ladder for five years and follow it through. As a new teacher I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to move to do as much as I want with my teaching career. I don't feel pressure to move on the ladder but its there if I want. I think we have given it a vote of confidence.

A South teacher leader expressed his expectations for career ladder in the middle of October:

> I expect career ladder to make teaching a more attractive field to go into. It can also make it better for those who have been in the system and have been hammered before. Morale around here is an about face over last year. . . . We're not all the same and don't all have to do the same things. Why should we deny the profession the opportunity to have avenues for advancement? This has been a boost for our expectations and an end to the idea that once you get tenure you can lay back.

One of the biggest frustrations to teachers trying the job redesign career ladder out for the first time was the gap between expectations and the real amount of work teachers can do for $900.00 in honest compensation. At West, the teachers who had worked hard as specialists felt they had more than filled the requirements of their roles. At South, a teacher leader said, "I really think that we have got a responsibility if we are doing it several years down the road in defining what a teacher leader is, so that they aren't expected to be God on a peasant salary."

Finally, a young teacher questioned a system entrenched in uniform seniority pay scales. "[If they have] two equally qualified candidates . . . [they] will make the decision based on seniority. Which means it will almost always be seniority." Is there room for us on the ladder based on quality?

The teachers and administrators at West had a difficult first year with career ladders. In spite of all the stress, however, several young teachers remained surprisingly sanguine about the potential of a career ladder in principle:

> My overall conception of the career ladder is fantastic if they can work it out to do what it is designed to do. I think it could be a great motivational tool. I think it could really encourage teachers to perfect their expertise in teaching, because you would all be shooting for a higher goal, higher professional image. . . . How I see it implemented and carried out here at West isn't anything that I really want to be a part of at this time.

Incentives and Merit. Teachers speculated about the relative draw of a career ladder as an incentive to attract or retain intellectually talented teachers. What the teachers in the two schools tended to agree on was that the alternative, various forms of pay for performance recognition, were not desireable. At South, a teacher leader remarked:

> My greatest frustration is to go outside the district and see people who do not understand what a [job redesign] career ladder is. They equate it with merit pay with no other variables. When I try to talk to them I talk oranges while they are talking watermelons. I wish the competition didn't have to happen, but it is necessary if the duties and opportunities are legitimately different.

Teachers said merit pay "scared them to death". Some found themselves defending career ladders because they found the alternative so distasteful. "Whenever I am asked about career ladders, I am always tempted to say it is great because the alternatives, one of which is merit pay, I just can't see at all. That is even worse."

Impatience and Challenge. "My gosh, it is an animal that is going to eat us." The challenge of redesigning the work of an entire career seemed insurmountable. Teachers at South and West experienced the pressures of a first year's stab at a beginning. The impatience that those who wanted the reform to work was only surpassed by the impatience of those who would abandon it.

> There tends to be a lot of impatience. People don't want to wait to see if it works. They want to look at it now and say yes or no. For some reason if there is any problem with something they want to discard it wholesale instead of fine tuning and making the program work. They would rather throw everything out and not have anything at all.

The challenge to the fortitude of those who work on career ladder committees and task forces was also great. In a journal entry from December, one teacher leader described the experience:

> It looks like the task force is moving a little more slowly or I'm a little impatient for things to move faster than they are. There are so many things that should be so obvious to people. The peer review is a pain. It would be nice if we didn't have to discuss the merit of a peer review every time we try to make a change in int. If we were to do away with it teachers would lose their chance to make a statement about the qualifications and ability of the individual to work as a teacher leader. We NEED the peer review! We spent an hour on it today.

> The next bone I need to pick is the reluctance of teachers to accept the idea that students can give us important information about the teaching that is going on in a classroom. Student input is valuable and shouldn't be something to be afraid of. . . .
> This was a frustrating career ladder meeting today!

Summary and Conclusions

West and South had very different experiences during the first year. However, the challenge of the effort was apparent in the data from both schools. A probationary teacher at West declared, "there's so much talk . . . a lot of negative. Some say it's not going to last a year. . . . A lot of complaining comes from those who didn't get the teacher ladder positions."

From the teachers of South, a note of respect for the level of effort required for such an undertaking:

> If we are having as many difficult times as we are having then what must it be like in those other places where they are not as organized or defined . . . as we are? That can be scary and at the same time gratifying, because you are here at South and not somewhere else. I think that as other schools see that these folks are doing it and it is working . . . maybe they will be willing [to give it a chance].

Career ladder teachers' tasks, the assessment of their impact on the schools, and the interaction of that assessment with the emotional tone surrounding the initial work of these teachers had great importance for the successful early stages of job redesign implementation for teachers. Unable to isolate their assessment of career ladders from their assessment of the reform's impact on school-wide improvement of student experiences, instructional methods, curriculum, and problem-solving, teachers responded in both schools with strong positive and negative feelings. The tasks and skills of career ladder teachers were assessed as a tremendous resource pool that was either tapped or wasted, depending on the circumstances; people's attitudes

often depended on their judgments about the use made of career ladder teachers resource for the school as a whole. Teachers and administrators came to judge their original expectations of the number and scope of tasks that could be completed as unrealistic, but the failure to accomplish visible, meaningful tasks, led to pressure to codify and restrict career ladder teachers' assignments, limiting their discretion.

The success of communication--of tasks, intentions, and motives--was important for the success of the career ladder effort. As the perception of communication and control improved, assessments of the positive potential of career ladders also improved and the first year's experience was judged to be progressive, hopeful, and a legitimate reform. Feedback about positive experiences led to increasing involvement of a growing circle of teachers in career ladder activities and interaction with career ladder teachers. When feedback was absent, teachers withdrew and became increasingly disenchanted. Indications that information between schools affected teacher attitudes were also apparent.

The data indicate that when the job redesign efforts were going well and the general assessment was positive, morale was positively affected; when the assessments were negative, morale decreased rapidly. Even positive changes were viewed with suspicion after an initially poor start.

Teachers were positive about the increase in control, authority, and decision-making opportunities presented by the career ladder reform when that involvement was seen as substantive. When the career ladder teachers were assertive in taking leadership initiative, the principal willingly shared power and communicated the new authority relationships to the faculty, and career ladder work was visibly affecting the school in positive ways, teachers

saw potential for real influences over their career choices. Young teachers in particular seemed to respond in positively, sizing up their future opportunities.

However, strong egalitarian norms functioned to make the career ladder opportunities for authority and influence uncomfortable for everyone. There was, even in the more successful school, discomfort with the idea that the huge majority of teachers were not leaders in the school. Repeated assertions that almost all teachers are excellent dominated the normative assessment of teacher quality.

The presence of opportunities created an environment where sharing by career ladder of instructional expertise and resources was encouraged; the effect of the ladder on cooperation and collegiality among the rest of the faculty was dependant on the level of resentment against career ladder teachers in the school. Benefitting, according to their own assessment, more than anyone else in the school, the career ladder teachers felt their own professional growth had been tremendous in a short time and that their perspective on education, schools, and schooling had been broadened.

The new authority structures conflicted with established organizational structures. Where articulation of the displacement of the old was clear, conflict was lowered. However, the administrative role of the assistant principal and status and authority relationships based on power and salary remained unresolved. Teachers and administrators were just beginning to explore potential new definitions of teaching.

Finally, as a career incentive, the career ladder job redesign affected different groups of teachers quite differently. Veteran teachers who were not chosen for leadership positions often reacted very negatively or disengaged

emotionally and professionally. Younger teaches making career plans began to assess what steps they might need to take to pursue their new ambitions. The stability of the reform, and the stability of the job assignments were serious concerns of the teachers, who saw temporary promotion or temporary earning opportunities as having little affect on their assessments of the future of teaching as a career.

Regardless of the formal system established to evaluate teachers or to select career ladder teachers, the importance of the perceived fairness and objectivity of the process cannot be understated. Evaluation as a teacher, separated from evaluation as a teacher deserving recognition, promotion, and responsibility, is nonsensical. Integration of the assessment system and its ability to discriminate among teachers affect teachers' perceptions of its arbitrariness or caprice.

Accountability--visibility and usefulness of work and level of effort by career ladder teachers--was vital to the confidence of teachers in the schools. Successful teaching, ability to interact with and assist others, and leadership potential were important characteristics; simply possessing instructional skills was not sufficient to sustain the confidence of faculties in the abilities of their career ladder teacher leaders. Humaneness was critical.

The first year of career ladder experience for the two subject schools reveals important dynamics for future work on teaching job redesign. Time to work through personal frustration, the disruption caused by the violation of long-standing if dysfunctional work norms, and the need for visible and assertive leadership on the part of principals and teacher leaders are critical components of the implementation stage. Policies, formal plans, and

good intentions will not carry a reform of work. Vanishing into comfortable and familiar forms, the initial reform impetus could fail at the school level without careful plan, training, and human resource intervention.

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